





H O M E R.

TRANSLATED BY

ALEXANDER POPE, ESQ. ^D

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

NEW-YORK:

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS,

NO. 82 CLIFF-STREET.

1844.

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"Translations almost always disappoint me; I must, however, except Pope's Homer, which has more of the spirit of Homer than all the other translations put together."—LORD BYRON.

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THE ODYSSEY.

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ODYSSEY.

BOOK V.

ARGUMENT.

The Departure of Ulysses from Calypso.

PALLAS in a council of the gods complains of the detention of Ulysses in the island of Calypso; whereon Mercury is sent to command his removal—The seat of Calypso described—She consents with much difficulty; and Ulysses builds a vessel with his own hands, on which he embarks—Neptune overtakes him with a terrible tempest, in which he is shipwrecked, and in the last danger of death; till Leucothea, a sea goddess, assists him, and, after innumerable perils, he gets ashore on Phæacia.

THE saffron morn, with early blushes spread,
Now rose refulgent from Tithonus' bed;
With newborn day to gladden mortal sight,
And gild the courts of heaven with sacred light.
Then met the eternal synod of the sky,
Before the god who thunders from on high,
Supreme in might, sublime in majesty.
Pallas, to these, deplores the unequal fates
Of wise Ulysses, and his toils relates:

5

Her hero's danger touch'd the pitying power, 10
 The nymph's seducements, and the magic bower.
 Thus she began her plaint : " Immortal Jove !
 And you who fill the blissful seats above !
 Let kings no more with gentle mercy sway,
 Or bless a people willing to obey, 15
 But crush the nations with an iron rod,
 And every monarch be the scourge of God ;
 If from your thoughts Ulysses you remove,
 Who ruled his subjects with a father's love.
 Sole in an isle, encircled by the main, 20
 Abandon'd, banish'd from his native reign,
 Unbless'd he sighs, detain'd by lawless charms,
 And press'd unwilling in Calypso's arms.
 Nor friends are there, nor vessels to convey,
 Nor oars to cut the immeasurable way. 25
 And now fierce traitors studious to destroy
 His only son, their ambush'd fraud employ ;
 Who, pious, following his great father's fame,
 To sacred Pylos and to Sparta came."

" What words are these !" replied the power who
 forms 30

The clouds of night, and darkens heaven with
 storms ;

" Is not already in thy soul decreed,
 The chief's return shall make the guilty bleed ?
 What cannot wisdom do ? 'Thou mayst restore
 The son in safety to his native shore ; 35
 While the fell foes, who late in ambush lay,
 With fraud defeated measure back their way."

Then thus to Hermes the command was given,
 " Hermes, thou chosen messenger of heaven !
 Go, to the nymph be these our orders borne : 40
 'Tis Jove's decree, Ulysses shall return :
 The patient man shall view his old abodes,
 Nor help'd by mortal hand, nor guiding gods :
 In twice ten days shall fertile Scheria find,
 Alone, and floating to the wave and wind. 45

The bold Phæacians there, whose haughty line
 Is mix'd with gods, half human, half divine,
 The chief shall honour as some heavenly guest,
 And swift transport him to his place of rest.
 His vessels loaded with a plenteous store 50
 Of brass, of vestures, and resplendent ore,
 (A richer prize than if his joyful isle
 Received him charged with Ilion's noble spoil,)
 His friends, his country, he shall see, though late;
 Such is our sovereign will, and such is fate." 55

He spoke. The god who mounts the winged
 winds

Fast to his feet the golden pinions binds,
 That high through fields of air his flight sustain
 O'er the wide earth, and o'er the boundless main.
 He grasps the wand that causes sleep to fly, 60
 Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye:
 Then shoots from heaven to high Pieria's steep,
 And stoops incumbent on the rolling deep.
 So watery fowl, that seek their fishy food,
 With wings expanded o'er the foaming flood, 65
 Now sailing smooth the level surface sweep,
 Now dip their pinions in the briny deep.
 Thus o'er the world of waters Hermes flew,
 Till now the distant island rose in view:
 Then, swift ascending from the azure wave, 70
 He took the path that winded to the cave.
 Large was the grot in which the nymph he found:
 (The fair-hair'd nymph, with every beauty crown'd.)
 She sat and sung; the rocks resound her lays:
 The cave was brighten'd with a rising blaze: 75
 Cedar and frankincense, an odorous pile,
 Flamed on the hearth, and wide perfumed the isle;
 While she with work and song the time divides,
 And through the loom the golden shuttle guides.
 Without the grot a various sylvan scene 80
 Appear'd around, and groves of living green;
 Poplars and alders ever quivering play'd,
 And nodding cypress form'd a fragrant shade;

On whose high branches, waving with the storm,
 The birds of broadest wing their mansions form, 85
 The chough, the sea mew, the loquacious crow,
 And scream aloft, and skim the deeps below.
 Depending vines the shelving cavern screen,
 With purple clusters blushing through the green,
 Four limpid fountains from the clefts distil; 90
 And every fountain pours a several rill,
 In mazy windings wandering down the hill;
 Where bloomy meads with vivid greens were
 crown'd,

And glowing violets threw odours round.
 A scene where if a god should cast his sight, 95
 A god might gaze and wander with delight!
 Joy touch'd the messenger of heaven; he staid
 Entranced, and all the blissful haunts survey'd.
 Him, entering in the cave, Calypso knew;
 For powers celestial to each other's view 100
 Stand still confess'd, though distant far they lie
 To habitants of earth, or sea, or sky.
 But sad Ulysses, by himself apart,
 Pour'd the big sorrows of his swelling heart;
 All on the lonely shore he sat to weep, 105
 And roll'd his eyes around the restless deep;
 Towards his loved coast he roll'd his eyes in vain,
 Till, dimm'd with rising grief, they stream'd again.

Now graceful seated on her shining throne,
 To Hermes thus the nymph divine begun: 110
 "God of the silver wand! on what behest
 Arrivest thou here, an unexpected guest?
 Loved as thou art, thy free injunctions lay;
 'Tis mine, with joy and duty to obey.
 Till now a stranger, in a happy hour 115
 Approach, and taste the dainties of my bower."

Thus having spoke, the nymph the table spread;
 (Ambrosial cates, with nectar rosy red;)
 Hermes the hospitable rite partook,
 Divine refection! then, recruited, spoke: 120

“What moved this journey from my native sky,
A goddess asks, nor can a god deny :
Hear then the truth. By mighty Jove’s command
Unwilling have I trod this pleasing land ;
For who, self-moved, with weary wing would sweep
Such length of ocean and unmeasured deep : 126
A world of waters ! far from all the ways
Where men frequent, or sacred altars blaze ?
But to Jove’s will submission we must pay ;
What power so great to dare to disobey ? 130
A man, he says, a man resides with thee,
Of all his kind most worn with misery ;
The Greeks, (whose arms for nine long years em-
ploy’d
Their force on Ilion, in the tenth destroy’d,)
At length embarking in a luckless hour, 135
With conquest proud, incensed Minerva’s power :
Hence on the guilty race her vengeance hurl’d
With storms pursued them through the liquid world.
There all his vessels sunk beneath the wave ! 139
There all his dear companions found their grave !
Saved from the jaws of death by Heaven’s decree,
The tempest drove him to these shores and thee.
Him, Jove now orders to his native lands
Straight to dismiss ; so destiny commands :
Impatient fate his near return attends, 145
And calls him to his country, and his friends.”
Ev’n to her inmost soul the goddess shook ;
Then thus her anguish and her passion broke :
“Ungracious gods ! with spite and envy cursed !
Still to your own ethereal race the worst ! 150
Ye envy mortal and immortal joy,
And love, the only sweet of life, destroy.
Did ever goddess by her charms engage
A favour’d mortal, and not feel your rage ?
So when Aurora sought Orion’s love, 155
Her joys disturb’d your blissful hours above,
Till, in Ortygia, Dian’s winged dart
Had pierced the hapless hunter to the heart.

So when the covert of the thrice-ear'd field
Saw stately Ceres to her passion yield, 160
Scarce could Iasion taste her heavenly charms,
But Jove's swift lightning scorch'd him in her arms.
And is it now my turn, ye mighty powers ?
Am I the envy of your blissful bowers ?
A man, an outcast to the storm and wave, 165
It was my crime to pity and to save ;
When he who thunders rent his bark in twain,
And sunk his brave companions in the main,
Alone, abandon'd, in mid-ocean toss'd,
The sport of winds, and driven from every coast,
Hither this man of miseries I led, 171
Received the friendless, and the hungry fed ;
Nay promised, vainly promised, to bestow
Immortal life, exempt from age and wo.
'Tis pass'd—and Jove decrees he shall remove ; 175
Gods as we are, we are but slaves to Jove.
Go then he may : (he must, if he ordain,
Try all those dangers, all those deeps again :)
But never, never shall Calypso send
To toil like these her husband and her friend. 180
What ships have I, what sailors to convey,
What oars to cut the long laborious way ?
Yet I'll direct the safest means to go ;
That last advice is all I can bestow."
To her the power who bears the charming rod :
"Dismiss the man, nor irritate the god ; 186
Prevent the rage of him who reigns above,
For what so dreadful as the wrath of Jove ?"
Thus having said, he cut the cleaving sky,
And in a moment vanish'd from her eye. 190
The nymph, obedient to divine command,
To seek Ulysses, paced along the sand.
Him pensive on the lonely beach she found,
With streaming eyes in briny torrents drown'd,
And inly pining for his native shore ; 195
For now the soft enchantress pleased no more :

For now, reluctant, and constrain'd by charms,
 Absent he lay in her desiring arms,
 In slumber wore the heavy night away,
 On rocks and shores consumed the tedious day ; 200
 There sat all desolate, and sigh'd alone,
 With echoing sorrows made the mountains groan,
 And roll'd his eyes o'er all the restless main,
 'Till dimm'd with rising grief they stream'd again.

Here on his musing mood the goddess press'd,
 Approaching soft ; and thus the chief address'd : 206
 " Unhappy man ! to wasting woes a prey,
 No more in sorrows languish life away :
 Free as the winds I give thee now to rove—
 Go, fell the timber of yon lofty grove, 210
 And form a raft, and build the rising ship,
 Sublime to bear thee o'er the gloomy deep.
 To store the vessel let the care be mine,
 With water from the rock, and rosy wine,
 And life-sustaining bread, and fair array, 215
 And prosperous gales to waft thee on the way.
 These, if the gods with my desires comply,
 (The gods, alas ! more mighty far than I,
 And better skill'd in dark events to come,)
 In peace shall land thee at thy native home." 220

With sighs Ulysses heard the words she spoke,
 Then thus his melancholy silence broke :
 " Some other motive, goddess, sways thy mind ;
 (Some close design, or turn of womankind ;) 225
 Nor my return the end, nor this the way,
 On a slight raft to pass the swelling sea,
 Huge, horrid, vast ! where scarce in safety sails
 The best built ship, though Jove inspire the gales.
 The bold proposal how shall I fulfil,
 Dark as I am, unconscious of thy will ? 230
 Swear then thou mean'st not what my soul forebodes ;
 Swear by the solemn oath that binds the gods."

Him, while he spoke, with smiles Calypso eyed,
 And gently grasp'd his hand, and thus replied :

“ This shows thee, friend. by old experience taught,
And learned in all the wiles of human thought. 236
How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wise!
But hear, oh earth, and hear, ye sacred skies!
And thou, oh Styx! whose formidable floods
Glide through the shades, and bind the attesting
 gods! 240

No form'd design, no meditated end,
Lurks in the counsel of thy faithful friend;
Kind the persuasion, and sincere my aim;
The same my practice, were my fate the same.
Heaven has not cursed me with a heart of steel, 245
But given the sense to pity, and to feel.”

Thus having said, the goddess march'd before:
He trod her footsteps in the sandy shore.
At the cool cave arrived, they took their state;
He fill'd the throne where Mercury had sat. 250
For him the nymph a rich repast ordains,
Such as the mortal life of man sustains;
Before herself were placed the cates divine,
Ambrosial banquet, and celestial wine.
Their hunger satiate, and their thirst repress'd, 255
Thus spoke Calypso to her godlike guest:

“ Ulysses!” with a sigh she thus began;
“ Oh sprung from gods! in wisdom more than man:
Is then thy home the passion of thy heart?
Thus wilt thou leave me, are we thus to part? 260
Farewell! and ever joyful mayst thou be,
Nor break the transport with one thought of me.
But, ah, Ulysses! wert thou given to know
What fate yet dooms thee yet to undergo;
Thy heart might settle in this scene of ease, 265
And ev'n these slighted charms might learn to please.
A willing goddess, and immortal life,
Might banish from thy mind an absent wife.
Am I inferior to a mortal dame?
Less soft my feature, less august my frame? 270
Or shall the daughters of mankind compare
Their earthborn beauties with the heavenly fair?”

“Alas ! for this,” the prudent man replies,
 “Against Ulysses shall thy anger rise ?
 Loved and adored, oh goddess, as thou art, 275
 Forgive the weakness of a human heart.
 Though well I see thy graces far above
 The dear, though mortal object of my love,
 Of youth eternal well the difference know,
 And the short date of fading charms below ; 280
 Yet every day while absent thus I roam,
 I languish to return and die at home.
 Whate’er the gods shall destine me to bear
 In the black ocean, or the watery war,
 ’Tis mine to master with a constant mind ; 285
 Inured to perils, to the worst resign’d,
 By seas, by wars, so many dangers run ;
 Still I can suffer: their high will be done !”

Thus while he spoke, the beamy sun descends,
 And rising night her friendly shade extends. 290
 To the close grot the lonely pair remove,
 And slept delighted with the gifts of love.
 When rosy morning call’d them from their rest,
 Ulysses robed him in the cloak and vest.
 The nymph’s fair head a veil transparent graced,
 Her swelling loins a radiant zone embraced 296
 With flowers of gold: an under robe, unbound,
 In snowy waves flow’d glittering on the ground.
 Forth issuing thus, she gave him first to wield
 A weighty axe, with truest temper steel’d, 300
 And double edged ; the handle smooth and plain,
 Wrought of the clouded olive’s easy grain ;
 And next, a wedge to drive with sweepy sway :
 Then to the neighbouring forest led the way.
 On the lone island’s utmost verge there stood 305
 Of poplars, pines, and firs, a lofty wood,
 Whose leafless summits to the skies aspire,
 Scorch’d by the sun, or sear’d by heavenly fire :
 (Already dried.) These pointing out to view,
 The nymph just show’d him, and with tears with-
 drew. 310

Now toils the hero : trees on trees o'erthrown
 Fall crackling round him, and the forests groan :
 Sudden, full twenty on the plain are strow'd,
 And lopp'd and lighten'd of their branchy load.
 At equal angles these disposed to join, 315
 He smoothed and squared them by the rule and line.
 (The wimbles for the work Calypso found :)
 With those he pierced them, and with clinchers
 bound.

Long and capacious as a shipwright forms
 Some bark's broad bottom to out ride the storms,
 So large he built the raft : then ribb'd it strong 321
 From space to space, and nail'd the planks along ;
 These form'd the sides : the deck he fashion'd last ;
 Then o'er the vessel raised the taper mast,
 With crossing sail yards dancing in the wind ; 325
 And to the helm the guiding rudder join'd :
 (With yielding osiers fenced, to break the force
 Of surging waves, and steer the steady course.)
 Thy loom, Calypso, for the future sails
 Supplied the cloth, capacious of the gales. 330
 With stays and cordage last he rigg'd the ship,
 And, roll'd on levers, launched her in the deep.

Four days were pass'd, and now the work
 complete,
 Shone the fifth morn, when from her sacred seat 334
 The nymph dismiss'd him, (odorous garments given,)
 And bathed in fragrant oils that breathed of heaven :
 Then fill'd two goatskins with her hands divine,
 With water one, and one with sable wine :
 Of every kind, provisions heaved aboard ;
 And the full decks with copious viands stored. 340
 The goddess, last, a gentle breeze supplies,
 To curl old ocean, and to warm the skies.

And, now, rejoicing in the prosperous gales,
 With beating heart Ulysses spreads his sails :
 Placed at the helm he sat, and mark'd the skies,
 Nor closed in sleep his ever-watchful eyes. 346

There view'd the Pleiads, and the Northern Team,
 And great Orion's more refulgent beam,
 To which, around the axle of the sky,
 The Bear, revolving, points his golden eye : 350
 Who shines exalted on the ethereal plain,
 Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main.
 Far on the left those radiant fires to keep
 The nymph directed, as he sail'd the deep.
 Full seventeen nights he cut the foamy way : 355
 The distant land appear'd the following day :
 Then swell'd to sight Phæacia's dusky coast,
 And woody mountains, half in vapours lost ;
 That lay before him indistinct and vast,
 Like a broad shield amid the watery waste. 360

But him, thus voyaging the deeps below,
 From far, on Solyme's aerial brow,
 The king of ocean saw, and, seeing, burn'd ;
 (From Æthiopia's happy climes return'd ;) 365
 The raging monarch shook his azure head,
 And thus in secret to his soul he said :

“Heavens! how uncertain are the powers on high!

Is then reversed the sentence of the sky,
 In one man's favour ; while a distant guest
 I shared secure the Æthiopian feast ? 370
 Behold how near Phæacia's land he draws !
 The land, affix'd by fate's eternal laws
 To end his toils. Is then our anger vain ?
 No ; if this sceptre yet commands the main.”

He spoke, and high the forky trident hurl'd, 375
 Rolls clouds on clouds, and stirs the watery world ;
 At once the face of earth and sea deforms,
 Swells all the winds, and rouses all the storms.
 Down rush'd the night : east, west, together roar ;
 And south and north roll mountains to the shore ;
 Then shook the hero, to despair resign'd, 381
 And question'd thus his yet unconquer'd mind :

“Wretch that I am! what further fates attend
 This life of toils, and what my destined end ?

Too well, alas ! the island goddess knew 385
On the black sea what perils should ensue.
New horrors now this destined head enclose ;
Unfill'd is yet the measure of my woes ;
With what a cloud the brows of heaven are crown'd !
What raging winds ! what roaring waters round !
'Tis Jove himself the swelling tempests rears ; 391
Death, present death, on every side appears.
Happy ! thrice happy ! who, in battle slain,
Press'd, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain !
Oh ! had I died before that well-fought wall ; 395
Had some distinguish'd day renown'd my fall ;
(Such as was that when showers of javelins fled
From conquering Troy around Achilles dead ;)
All Greece had paid me solemn funerals then,
And spread my glory with the sons of men. 400
A shameful fate now hides my hapless head,
Unwept, unnoted, and for ever dead !"

A mighty wave rush'd o'er him as he spoke,
The raft it cover'd, and the mast it broke ;
Swept from the deck, and from the rudder torn, 405
Far on the swelling surge the chief was borne ;
While by the howling tempest rent in twain
Flew sail and sail yards rattling o'er the main.
Long press'd, he heaved beneath the mighty wave,
Clogg'd by the cumbrous vest Calypso gave : 410
At length emerging, from his nostrils wide
And gushing mouth effused the briny tide ;
Ev'n then not mindless of his last retreat,
He seized the raft, and leap'd into his seat,
Strong with the fear of death. The rolling flood 415
Now here, now there, impell'd the floating wood.
As when a heap of gather'd thorns is cast
Now to, now fro, before the autumnal blast ;
Together clung, it rolls around the field ;
So roll'd the float, and so its texture held : 420
And now the south, and now the north bear sway,
And now the east the foamy floods obey,
And now the west wind whirls it o'er the sea.

The wandering chief with toils on toils oppress'd,
 Leucothea saw, and pity touch'd her breast : 425
 (Herself a mortal once, of Cadmus' strain,
 But now an azure sister of the main.)

Swift as a sea mew, springing from the flood,
 All radiant on the raft the goddess stood :
 Then thus address'd him : " Thou, whom Heaven
 decrees 430

To Neptune's wrath, stern tyrant of the seas !
 (Unequal contest !) not his rage and power,
 Great as he is, such virtue shall devour.

What I suggest, thy wisdom will perform ;
 Forsake thy float, and leave it to the storm : 435
 Strip off thy garments ; Neptune's fury brave
 With naked strength, and plunge into the wave.

To reach Phæacia all thy nerves extend,
 There fate decrees thy miseries shall end.

This heavenly scarf beneath thy bosom bind, 440
 And live ; give all thy terrors to the wind.

Soon as thy arms the happy shore shall gain,
 Return the gift, and cast it in the main ;
 Observe my orders, and with heed obey,
 Cast it far off, and turn thy eyes away." 445

With that, her hand the sacred veil bestows,
 Then down the deeps she dived from whence she
 rose ;

A moment snatch'd the shining form away,
 And all was cover'd with the curling sea.

Struck with amaze, yet still to doubt inclined,
 He stands suspended, and explores his mind. 451

" What shall I do ? unhappy me ! who knows
 But other gods intend me other woes ?

Whoe'er thou art, I shall not blindly join
 Thy pleaded reason, but consult with mine : 455

For scarce in ken appears that distant isle
 Thy voice foretels me shall conclude my toil.

Thus then I judge : while yet the planks sustain
 The wild waves' fury, here I fix'd remain ;

But when their texture to the tempest yields, 460
I launch adventurous on the liquid fields,
Join to the help of gods the strength of man,
And take this method, since the best I can."

While thus his thoughts an anxious council hold,
'The raging god a watery mountain roll'd; 465
Like a black sheet the whelming billows spread,
Burst o'er the float, and thunder'd on his head.
Planks, beams, disparted fly; the scatter'd wood
Rolls diverse, and in fragments strews the flood.
So the rude Boreas, o'er the field new shorn, 470
Tosses and drives the scatter'd heaps of corn.
And now a single beam the chief bestrides;
There poised a while above the bounding tides,
His limbs discumbers of the clinging vest,
And binds the sacred cincture round his breast: 475
Then prone on ocean in a moment flung,
Stretch'd wide his eager arms, and shot the seas
along.

All naked now, on heaving billows laid,
Stern Neptune eyed him, and contemptuous said:
"Go, learn'd in woes, and other foes essay! 480
Go, wander helpless on the watery way:
Thus, thus find out the destined shore, and then
(If Jove ordains it) mix with happier men.
Whate'er thy fate, the ills our wrath could raise
Shall last remember'd in thy best of days." 485

This said, his sea-green steeds divide the foam,
And reach high Ægæ and the towery dome.
Now, scarce withdrawn the fierce earth-shaking
power,
Jove's daughter Pallas watch'd the favouring hour.
Back to their caves she bade the winds to fly, 490
And hush'd the blustering brethren of the sky.
The drier blasts alone of Boreas sway,
And bear him soft on broken waves away;
With gentle force impelling to that shore,
Where fate has destined he shall toil no more. 495

And now two nights, and now two days were pass'd,
Since wide he wander'd on the watery waste ;
Heaved on the surge with intermitting breath,
And hourly panting in the arms of death.
The third fair morn now blazed upon the main ; 500
'Then glassy smooth lay all the liquid plain ;
The winds were hush'd, the billows scarcely curl'd,
And a dead silence still'd the watery world ;
When lifted on a ridgy wave he spies
The land at distance, and with sharpen'd eyes. 505
As pious children joy with vast delight
When a loved sire revives before their sight ;
(Who, lingering long, has call'd on death in vain,
Fix'd by some demon to his bed of pain,
Till Heaven by miracle his life restore ;) 510
So joys Ulysses at the appearing shore ;
And sees (and labours onward as he sees)
The rising forests and the tufted trees.
And now, as near approaching as the sound
Of human voice the listening ear may wound, 515
Amid the rocks he heard a hollow roar
Of murmuring surges breaking on the shore :
Nor peaceful port was there, nor winding bay,
To shield the vessel from the rolling sea,
But cliffs and shaggy shores, a dreadful sight ! 520
All rough with rocks, with foamy billows white.
Fear seized his slacken'd limbs and beating heart,
As thus he communed with his soul apart :
“ Ah me ! when o'er a length of waters toss'd,
These eyes at last behold the unhop'd-for coast, 525
No port receives me from the angry main,
But the loud deeps demand me back again.
Above sharp rocks forbid access ; around
Roar the wild waves ; beneath is sea profound !
No footing sure affords the faithless sand, 530
To stem too rapid, and too deep to stand.
If here I enter, my efforts are vain,
Dash'd on the cliffs, or heaved into the main ;

Or round the island if my course I bend,
Where the ports open, or the shores descend, 535
Back to the seas the rolling surge may sweep,
And bury all my hopes beneath the deep.

Or some enormous whale the god may send;
(For many such on Amphitrite attend;)
Too well the turns of mortal chance I know, 540
And hate relentless of my heavenly foe."

While thus he thought, a monstrous wave upbore
The chief, and dash'd him on the craggy shore;
Torn was his skin, nor had the ribs been whole,
But instant Pallas enter'd in his soul. 545

Close to the cliff with both his hands he clung,
And stuck adherent, and suspended hung,
Till the huge surge roll'd of; then, backward sweep
The refluent tides, and plunge him in the deep.
As when the polypus, from forth his cave 550

Torn with full force, reluctant beats the wave,
His ragged claws are stuck with stones and sands;
So the rough rock had shagg'd Ulysses' hands,
And now had perish'd, whelm'd beneath the main,
The unhappy man; ev'n fate had been in vain: 555

But all-subduing Pallas lent her power,
And prudence saved him in the needful hour.
Beyond the beating surge his course he bore,
(A wider circle, but in sight of shore,)

With longing eyes, observing, to survey 560
Some smooth ascent, or safe sequester'd bay.

Between the parting rocks at length he spied
A falling stream with gentler waters glide;
Where to the seas the shelving shore declined,
And form'd a bay impervious to the wind. 565

To this calm port the glad Ulysses press'd,
And hail'd the river, and its god address'd:

"Whoe'er thou art, before whose stream unknown
I bend, a suppliant at thy watery throne,
Hear, azure king! nor let me fly in vain 570
To thee from Neptune and the raging main.

Heaven hears and pities hapless men like me,
For sacred ev'n to gods is misery :
Let then thy waters give the weary rest,
And save a suppliant, and a man distress'd." 575

He pray'd, and straight the gentle stream subsides,
Detains the rushing current of his tides,
Before the wanderer smooths the watery way,
And soft receives him from the rolling sea.
That moment fainting as he touch'd the shore, 580
He dropp'd his sinewy arms : his knees no more
Perform'd their office, or his weight upheld :
His swoln heart heaved ; his bloated body swell'd :
From mouth and nose the briny torrent ran ;
And lost in lassitude lay all the man, 585
Deprived of voice, of motion, and of breath ;
The soul scarce waking in the arms of death.
Soon as warm life its wonted office found,
The mindful chief Leucothea's scarf unbound ;
Observant of her word, he turn'd aside 590
His head, and cast it on the rolling tide.
Behind him far, upon the purple waves
The waters waft it, and the nymph receives.

Now parting from the stream, Ulysses found
A mossy bank with pliant rushes crown'd ; 595
The bank he press'd, and gently kiss'd the ground :
Where on the flowery herb as soft he lay,
Thus to his soul the sage began to say :

“ What will ye next ordain, ye powers on high ?
And yet, ah yet, what fates are we to try ? 600
Here by the stream, if I the night outwear,
Thus spent already, how shall nature bear
The dews descending, and nocturnal air ;
Or chilly vapours breathing from the flood
When morning rises ? If I take the wood, 605
And in thick shelter of innumerable boughs
Enjoy the comfort gentle sleep allows ;
Though fenced from cold, and though my toil be
pass'd,
What savage beasts may wander in the waste !

Perhaps I yet may fall a bloody prey 610
To prowling beasts or lions in the way."

Thus long debating in himself he stood :
At length he took the passage to the wood,
Whose shady horrors on a rising brow 614
Waved high, and frown'd upon the stream below.

There grew two olives, closest of the grove,
With roots entwined, and branches interwove ;
Alike their leaves, but not alike they smiled
With sister fruits ; one fertile, one was wild.

Nor here the sun's meridian rays had power, 620
Nor wind sharp piercing, nor the rushing shower ;

The verdant arch so close its texture kept :
Beneath this covert great Ulysses crept.
Of gather'd leaves an ample bed he made ;
(Thick strewn by tempest through the bowery
shade ;) 625

Where three at least might winter's cold defy,
Though Boreas raged along the inclement sky.
This store with joy the patient hero found,
And, sunk amid them, heap'd the leaves around.

As some poor peasant, fated to reside 630

Remote from neighbours in a forest wide,
Studious to save what human wants require,
In embers heap'd, preserves the seeds of fire :
Hid in dry foliage thus Ulysses lies,

Till Pallas pour'd soft slumbers on his eyes ; 635
And golden dreams (the gift of sweet repose)
Lull'd all his cares, and banish'd all his woes.

BOOK VI.

ARGUMENT.

PALLAS appearing in a dream to Nausicaa, the daughter of Alcinous, king of Phæacia, commands her to descend to the river, and wash the robes of state, in preparation to her nuptials—Nausicaa goes with her handmaids to the river ; where, while the garments are spread on the bank, they divert themselves in sports—Their voices awake Ulysses, who, addressing himself to the princess, is by her relieved and clothed, and receives directions in what manner to apply to the king and queen of the island.

WHILE thus the weary wanderer sunk to rest,
And peaceful slumbers calm'd his anxious breast,
The martial maid, from heaven's aerial height,
Swift to Phæacia wing'd her rapid flight.
In elder times the soft Phæacian train 5
In ease possess'd the wide Hyperian plain ;
Till the Cyclopean race in arms arose,
A lawless nation of gigantic foes :
Then great Nausithous from Hyperia far
Through seas retreating from the sound of war, 10
The recreant nation to fair Scheria led,
Where never Science rear'd her laurell'd head :
There round his tribes a strength of wall he rais'd ;
To heaven the glittering domes and temples blazed ;
Just to his realms, he parted grounds from grounds,
And shared the lands, and gave the lands their
bounds. 16
Now in the silent grave the monarch lay,
And wise Alcinous held the regal sway.
To his high palace through the fields of air
The goddess shot ; Ulysses was her care. 20

There as the night in silence roll'd away,
 A heaven of charms divine Nausicaa lay :
 Through the thick gloom the shining portals blaze ;
 Two nymphs the portals guard, each nymph a Grace.
 Light as the viewless air, the warrior maid 25
 Glides through the valves, and hovers round her head ;
 A favourite virgin's blooming form she took,
 From Dymas sprung, and thus the vision spoke :

“ Oh indolent ! to waste thy hours away !
 And sleep'st thou careless of the bridal day ? 30
 Thy spousal ornament neglected lies ;
 Arise, prepare the bridal train, arise !
 A just applause the cares of dress impart,
 And give soft transport to a parent's heart.
 Haste, to the limpid stream direct thy way, 35
 When the gay morn unveils her smiling ray :
 Haste to the stream ! companion of thy care,
 Lo, I thy steps attend, thy labours share.
 Virgin, awake ! the marriage hour is nigh,
 See ! from their thrones thy kindred monarchs sigh !
 The royal car at early dawn obtain, 41
 And order mules obedient to the rein ;
 For rough the way, and distant rolls the wave,
 Where their fair vests Phæacian virgins lave.
 In pomp ride forth ; for pomp becomes the great, 45
 And majesty derives a grace from state.”

Then to the palaces of heaven she sails,
 Incumbent on the wings of wafting gales ;
 The seat of gods ; the regions mild of peace,
 Full joy, and calm eternity of ease. 50
 There no rude winds presume to shake the skies,
 No rains descend, no snowy vapours rise ;
 But on immortal thrones the bless'd repose ;
 The firmament with living splendours glows.
 Hither the goddess wing'd the aerial way, 55
 Through heaven's eternal gates that blazed with day.

Now from her rosy car Aurora shed
 The dawn, and all the orient flamed with red.

Up rose the virgin with the morning light,
 Obedient to the vision of the night. 60
 The queen she sought, the queen her hours bestow'd
 In curious works; the whirling spindle glow'd
 With crimson threads, while busy damsels cull
 The snowy fleece, or twist the purpled wool.
 Meanwhile Phæacia's peers in council sat; 65
 From his high dome the king descends in state,
 Then with a filial awe the royal maid
 Approach'd him passing, and submissive said:
 "Will my dread sire his ear regardful deign,
 And may his child the royal car obtain? 70
 Say, with thy garments shall I bend my way,
 Where through the vales the mazy waters stray?
 A dignity of dress adorns the great,
 And kings draw lustre from the robe of state.
 Five sons thou hast; three wait the bridal day, 75
 And spotless robes become the young and gay:
 So when with praise amid the dance they shine,
 By these my cares adorn'd, that praise is mine."
 Thus she: but blushes ill restrain'd betray
 Her thoughts intente on the bridal day: 80
 The conscious sire the dawning blush survey'd,
 And smiling thus bespoke the blooming maid:
 "My child, my darling joy, the car receive;
 That, and whate'er our daughter asks, we give."
 Swift at the royal nod the attending train 85
 The car prepare, the mules incessant rein.
 The bashful virgin, with despatchful cares,
 Tunics, and stoles, and robes imperial, bears.
 The queen, assiduous, to her train assigns
 The sumptuous viands, and the flavorful wines. 90
 The train prepare a cruise of curious mould,
 A cruise of fragrance, form'd of burnish'd gold;
 Odour divine! whose soft refreshing streams
 Sleek the smooth skin, and scent the snowy limbs.
 Now mounting the gay seat, the silken reins 95
 Shine in her hand; along the sounding plains

Swift fly the mules : nor rode the nymph alone ;
Around, a bevy of bright damsels shone.
They seek the cisterns where Phæacian dames
Wash their fair garments in the limpid streams ;
Where, gathering into depth from falling rills, 101
The lucid wave a spacious basin fills.
The mules unharness'd range beside the main,
Or crop the verdant herbage of the plain.

Then emulous the royal robes they lave, 105
And plunge the vestures in the cleansing wave ;
(The vestures cleansed o'erspread the shelly sand,
Their snowy lustre whitens all the strand ;)
Then with a short repast relieve their toil,
And o'er their limbs diffuse ambrosial oil ; 110
And while the robes imbibe the solar ray,
O'er the green mead the sporting virgins play—
(Their shining veils unbound.) Along the skies
Toss'd, and retoss'd, the ball incessant flies. 114
They sport, they feast ; Nausicaa lifts her voice,
And, warbling sweet, makes heaven and earth re-
joice.

As when o'er Erymanth Diana roves,
Or wide Taygetus's resounding groves ;
A sylvan train the huntress queen surrounds,
Her rattling quiver from her shoulder sounds : 120
Fierce in the sport, along the mountain's brow
They bay the boar, or chase the bounding roe ;
High o'er the lawn, with more majestic pace,
Above the nymphs she treads with stately grace ;
Distinguish'd excellence the goddess proves ; 125
Exults Latona as the virgin moves.
With equal grace Nausicaa trod the plain,
And shone transcendent o'er the beauteous train.

Meantime, (the care and favourite of the skies,)
Wrapp'd in imbowering shade, Ulysses lies, 130
His woes forgot ! but Pallas now address'd
To break the bands of all-composing rest.
Forth from her snowy hand Nausicaa threw
The various ball ; the ball erroneous flew,

And swam the stream : loud shrieks the virgin train,
 And the loud shriek redoubles from the main. 136
 Waked by the shrilling sound, Ulysses rose,
 And, to the deaf woods wailing, breathed his woes :
 “ Ah me ! on what inhospitable coast,
 On what new region is Ulysses toss'd ; 140
 Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms ;
 Or men, whose bosom tender pity warms ?
 What sounds are these that gather from the shores ?
 The voice of nymphs that haunt the sylvan bow-
 ers,
 The fair-hair'd Dryads of the shady wood ; 145
 Or azure daughters of the silver flood ;
 Or human voice ? but, issuing from the shades,
 Why cease I straight to learn what sound invades ? ”
 Then, where the grove with leaves umbrageous
 bends,
 With forceful strength a branch the hero rends ; 150
 Around his loins the verdant cincture spreads
 A wreathy foliage and concealing shades.
 As when a lion in the midnight hours,
 Beat by rude blasts, and wet with wintry showers,
 Descends terrific from the mountain's brow ; 155
 With living flames his rolling eyeballs glow ;
 With conscious strength elate, he bends his way,
 Majestically fierce, to seize his prey ;
 (The steer or stag ;) or, with keen hunger bold,
 Springs o'er the fence, and dissipates the fold. 160
 No less a terror, from the neighbouring groves
 (Rough from the tossing surge) Ulysses moves ;
 Urged on by want, and recent from the storms :
 The brackish ooze his manly grace deforms.
 Wide o'er the shore with many a piercing cry 165
 To rocks, to caves, the frightened virgins fly ;
 All but the nymph : the nymph stood fix'd alone,
 By Pallas arm'd with boldness not her own.
 Meantime in dubious thought the king awaits,
 And, self-considering, as he stands, debates ; 170

Distant his mournful story to declare,
Or prostrate at her knee address the prayer.
But fearful to offend, by wisdom sway'd,
At awful distance he accosts the maid :

“ If from the skies a goddess, or if earth 175
(Imperial virgin) boast thy glorious birth,
To thee I bend ! If in that bright disguise
Thou visit earth, a daughter of the skies,
Hail, Dian, hail ! the huntress of the groves
So shines majestic, and so stately moves, 180
So breathes an air divine ! But if thy race
Be mortal, and this earth thy native place,
Bless'd is the father from whose loins you sprung,
Bless'd is the mother at whose breast you hung,
Bless'd are the brethren who thy blood divide, 185
'To such a miracle of charms allied :
Joyful they see applauding princes gaze,
When stately in the dance you swim the harmonious
maze.

But bless'd o'er all, the youth with heavenly charms,
Who clasps the bright perfection in his arms ! 190
Never, I never view'd till this bless'd hour
Such finish'd grace ! I gaze, and I adore !
'Thus seems the palm, with stately honours crown'd
By Phœbus' altars ; thus o'erlooks the ground ;
The pride of Delos. (By the Delian coast, 195
I voyaged, leader of a warrior host,
But ah, how changed ! from thence my sorrow
flows ;

Oh fatal voyage, source of all my woes !)
Raptured I stood, and as this hour amazed,
With reverence at the lofty wonder gazed : 200
Raptured I stand ! for earth ne'er knew to bear
A plant so stately, or a nymph so fair.
Awed from access, I lift my suppliant hands :
For Misery, oh queen, before thee stands !
'Twice ten tempestuous nights I roll'd, resign'd 205
To roaring billows, and the warring wind ;

Heaven bade the deep to spare ! but Heaven, my foe,
 Spares only to inflict some mightier wo !
 Inured to cares, to death in all its forms ;
 Outcast I rove, familiar with the storms ! 210
 Once more I view the face of human kind :
 Oh, let soft pity touch thy generous mind !
 Unconscious of what air I breathe, I stand
 Naked, defenceless on a foreign land.
 Propitious to my wants, a vest supply 215
 To guard the wretched from the inclement sky :
 So may the gods, who heaven and earth control,
 Crown the chaste wishes of thy virtuous soul,
 On thy soft hours their choicest blessings shed ;
 Bless'd with a husband be thy bridal bed ; 220
 Bless'd be thy husband with a blooming race,
 And lasting union crown your blissful days.
 'The gods, when they supremely bless, bestow
 Firm union on their favourites below :
 Then envy grieves, with inly pining hate : 225
 'The good exult, and heaven is in our state."

To whom the nymph : " Oh stranger, cease thy
 care ;

Wise is thy soul, but man is born to bear :
 Jove weighs the affairs of earth in dubious scales,
 And the good suffers, while the bad prevails. 230
 Bear, with a soul resign'd, the will of Jove ;
 Who breathes, must mourn : thy woes are from
 above.

But since thou tread'st our hospitable shore,
 'Tis mine to bid the wretched grieve no more,
 To clothe the naked, and thy way to guide— 235
 Know, the Phæacian tribes this land divide ;
 From great Alcinous' royal loms I spring,
 A happy nation, and a happy king."

Then to her maids : " Why, why, ye coward train,
 These fears, this flight ? ye fear, and fly in vain. 240
 Dread ye a foe ? dismiss that idle dread,
 'Tis death with hostile step these shores to tread :

Safe in the love of Heaven, an ocean flows
Around our realm, a barrier from the foes ;
'Tis ours this son of sorrow to relieve, 245
Cheer the sad heart, nor let affliction grieve.
By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent ;
And what to those we give, to Jove is lent.
Then food supply, and bathe his fainting limbs
Where waving shades obscure the mazy streams."

Obedient to the call, the chief they guide 251
To the calm current of the secret tide ;
Close by the stream a royal dress they lay,
A vest and robe, with rich embroidery gay :
Then unguents in a golden vase supply, 255
That breathed a fragrance through the balmy sky.

To them the king : " No longer I detain
Your friendly care : retire, ye virgin train !
Retire, while from my wearied limbs I lave
The foul pollution of the briny wave. 260
Ye gods ! since this worn frame refection knew,
What scenes have I survey'd of dreadful view !
But, nymphs, recede ! sage chastity denies
To raise the blush, or pain the modest eyes."

The nymphs withdrawn, at once into the tide 265
Active he bounds ; the flashing waves divide :
O'er all his limbs his hands the wave diffuse,
And from his locks compress the weedy ooze ;
The balmy oil, a fragrant shower, he sheds ;
Then, dress'd, in pomp magnificently treads. 270
The warrior goddess gives his frame to shine
With majesty enlarged, and air divine :
Back from his brows a length of hair unfurls,
His hyacinthine locks descend in wavy curls.
As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives 275
His skill divine, a breathing statue lives ;
By Pallas taught, he frames the wondrous mould,
And o'er the silver pours the fusile gold.
So Pallas his heroic frame improves
With heavenly bloom, and like a god he moves. 280

A fragrance breathes around ; majestic grace
Attends his steps : the astonish'd virgins gaze.
Soft he reclines along the murmuring seas,
Inhaling freshness from the fanning breeze.

The wondering nymph his glorious port survey'd,
And to her damsels, with amazement said : 286

“Not without care divine the stranger treads
This land of joy ; his steps some godhead leads :
Would Jove destroy him, sure he had been driven
Far from this realm, the favourite isle of heaven.
Late a sad spectacle of wo, he trod 291

The desert sands, and now he looks a god.
Oh Heaven ! in my connubial hour decree
This man my spouse, or such a spouse as he !
But haste, the viands and the bowl provide.” 295

The maids the viands and the bowl supplied :
Eager he fed, for keen his hunger raged,
And with the generous vintage thirst assuaged.

Now on return her care Nausicaa bends,
The robes resumes, the glittering car ascends, 300
Far blooming o'er the field ; and as she press'd
The splendid seat, the listening chief address'd :

“Stranger, arise ! the sun rolls down the day,
Lo, to the palace I direct thy way ;
Where in high state the nobles of the land 305
Attend my royal sire, a radiant band.

But hear, though wisdom in thy soul presides,
Speaks from thy tongue, and every action guides,
Advance at distance, while I pass the plain
Where o'er the furrows waves the golden grain :
Alone I reascend. With airy mounds 311

A strength of wall the guarded city bounds :
The jutting land two ample bays divides ;
Full through the narrow mouths descend the tides ;
The spacious basins arching rocks enclose, 315
A sure defence from every storm that blows.
Close to the bay great Neptune's fane adjoins ;
And near, a forum flank'd with marble shines,

Where the bold youth, the numerous fleets to store,
Shape the broad sail, or smooth the taper oar: 320
For not the bow they bend, nor boast the skill
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill;
But the tall mast above the vessel rear,
Or teach the fluttering sail to float in air.
They rush into the deep with eager joy, 325
Climb the steep surge, and through the tempest fly:
A proud, unpolish'd race. To me belongs

The care to shun the blast of slanderous tongues;
Lest malice, prone the virtuous to defame,
'Thus with vile censure taint my spotless name: 330

“ ‘What stranger this whom thus Nausicaa leads?
Heavens, with what graceful majesty he treads!
Perhaps a native of some distant shore,
The future consort of her bridal hour;
Or rather some descendant of the skies; 335
Won by her prayer, the aerial bridegroom flies.
Heaven on that hour its choicest influence shed,
That gave a foreign spouse to crown her bed!
All, all the godlike worthies that adorn
'This realm, she flies: Phæacia is her scorn.' 340

“ And just the blame; for female innocence
Not only flies the guilt, but shuns the offence:
The unguarded virgin, as unchaste, I blame;
And the least freedom with the sex is shame,
Till our consenting sires a spouse provide, 345
And public nuptials justify the bride.

“ But wouldst thou soon review thy native plain?
Attend, and speedy thou shalt pass the main:
Nigh where a grove with verdant poplars crown'd,
To Pallas sacred, shades the holy ground, 350
We bend our way: a bubbling fount distils
A lucid lake, and thence descends in rills;
Around the grove, a mead with lively green
Falls by degrees, and forms a beauteous scene;
Here a rich juice the royal vineyard pours; 355
And there the garden yields a waste of flowers.

Hence lies the town, as far as to the ear
Floats a strong shout along the waves of air.
There wait imbower'd, while I ascend alone
To great Alcinous on his royal throne. 360

“ Arrived, advance, impatient of delay,
And to the lofty palace bend thy way :
The lofty palace overlooks the town,
From every dome by pomp superior known ;
A child may point the way. With earnest gait 365
Seek thou the queen along the rooms of state ;
Her royal hand a wondrous work designs,
Around a circle of bright damsels shines,
Part twist the threads, and part the wool dispose,
While with the purple orb the spindle glows. 370
High on a throne, amid the Scherian powers,
My royal father shares the genial hours ;
But to the queen thy mournful tale disclose,
With the prevailing eloquence of woes :
So shalt thou view with joy thy natal shore, 375
Though mountains rise between, and oceans roar ”

She added not, but waving as she wheel'd
The silver scourge, it glitter'd o'er the field :
With skill the virgin guides the embroider'd rein,
Slow rolls the car before the attending train. 380
Now whirling down the heavens, the golden day
Shot through the western clouds a dewy ray ;
The grove they reach, where from the sacred shade
To Pallas thus the pensive hero pray'd : 384

“ Daughter of Jove ! whose arms in thunder wield
The avenging bolt, and shake the dreadful shield ;
Forsook by thee, in vain I sought thy aid
When booming billows closed above my head ;
Attend, unconquer'd maid ! accord my vows,
Bid the Great hear, and pitying heal my woes.” 390

This heard Minerva, but forbore to fly
(By Neptune awed) apparent from the sky ;
Stern god ! who raged with vengeance unrestrain'd,
Till great Ulysses hail'd his native land.

BOOK VII.

ARGUMENT.

The Court of Alcinous.

THE Princess Nausicaa returns to the city, and Ulysses soon after follows thither—He is met by Pallas in the form of a young virgin, who guides him to the palace, and directs him in what manner to address the Queen Arete—She then involves him in a mist, which causes him to pass invisible—The palace and gardens of Alcinous described—Ulysses falling at the feet of the queen, the mist disperses, the Phæacians admire, and receive him with respect—The queen inquiring by what means he had the garments he then wore, he relates to her and Alcinous his departure from Calypso, and his arrival on their dominions.—[The same day continues, and the book ends with the night.]

THE patient heavenly man thus suppliant pray'd ;
While the slow mules draw on the imperial maid :
Through the proud street she moves, the public gaze ;
The turning wheel before the palace stays.
With ready love her brothers gathering round, 5
Received the vestures, and the mules unbound.
She seeks the bridal bower : a matron there
The rising fire supplies with busy care,
Whose charms in youth her father's heart inflamed,
Now worn with age, Eurymedusa named : 10
The captive dame Phæacian rovers bore,
Snatch'd from Epirus, her sweet native shore,
(A grateful prize.) and in her bloom bestow'd
On good Alcinous, honour'd as a god ;
Nurse of Nausicaa from her infant years, 15
And tender second to a mother's cares.

Now from the sacred thicket where he lay,
 To town Ulysses took the winding way.
 Propitious Pallas, to secure her care,
 Around him spread a veil of thicken'd air; 20
 To shun the encounter of the vulgar crowd,
 Insulting still, inquisitive and loud.
 When near the famed Phæacian walls he drew,
 The beauteous city opening to his view,
 His step a virgin met, and stood before : 25
 A polish'd urn the seeming virgin bore,
 And youthful smiled ; but in the low disguise
 Lay hid the goddess with the azure eyes.

“ Show me, fair daughter,” thus the chief demands,
 “ The house of him who rules these happy lands. 30
 Through many woes and wanderings, lo ! I come
 To good Alcinous' hospitable dome.
 Far from my native coast, I rove alone,
 A wretched stranger, and of all unknown !”

The goddess answer'd : “ Father, I obey, 35
 And point the wandering traveller his way :
 Well known to me the palace you inquire,
 For fast beside it dwells my honour'd sire :
 But silent march, nor greet the common train
 With question needless, or inquiry vain : 40
 A race of rugged mariners are these ;
 Unpolish'd men, and boisterous as their seas ;
 The native islanders alone their care,
 And hateful he who breathes a foreign air.
 These did the ruler of the deep ordain 45
 To build proud navies and command the main ;
 On canvass wings to cut the watery way ;
 No bird so light, no thought so swift as they.”

Thus having spoke, the unknown celestial leads :
 The footsteps of the deity he treads, 50
 And secret moves along the crowded space,
 Unseen of all the rude Phæacian race.
 (So Pallas order'd. Pallas to their eyes
 The mist objected, and condensed the skies.)

The chief with wonder sees the extended streets,
 The spreading harbours, and the riding fleets; 56
 He next their princes' lofty domes admires,
 In separate islands, crown'd with rising spires;
 And deep intrenchments, and high walls of stone,
 That gird the city like a marble zone. 60
 At length the kingly palace gates he view'd;
 There stopp'd the goddess, and her speech renew'd.
 "My task is done: the mansion you inquire
 Appears before you; enter, and admire.
 High throned, and feasting, there thou shalt behold
 The sceptred rulers. Fear not, but be bold: 66
 A decent boldness ever meets with friends,
 Succeeds, and ev'n a stranger recommends.
 First to the queen prefer a suppliant's claim,
 Alcinous' queen, Arete is her name, 70
 The same her parents, and her power the same.
 For know, from ocean's god Nausithous sprung,
 And Peribœa, beautiful and young,
 (Eurymedon's last hope, who ruled of old
 The race of giants, impious, proud, and bold; 75
 Perish'd the nation in unrighteous war,
 Perish'd the prince, and left this only heir,)
 Who now, by Neptune's amorous power compress'd,
 Produced a monarch that his people bless'd,
 Father and prince of the Phæacian name; 80
 From him Rhexenor and Alcinous came.
 The first by Phœbus' burning arrows fired,
 New from his nuptials, hapless youth! expired.
 No son survived: Arete heir'd his state,
 And her, Alcinous chose his royal mate. 85
 With honours yet to womankind unknown,
 This queen he graces, and divides the throne:
 In equal tenderness her sons conspire,
 And all the children emulate their sire.
 When through the street she gracious deigns to
 move, 90
 (The public wonder and the public love,)

The tongues of all with transport sound her praise,
 The eyes of all, as on a goddess, gaze.
 She feels the triumph of a generous breast ;
 To heal divisions, to relieve the oppress'd ; 95
 In virtue rich ; in blessing others, bless'd.
 Go then secure, thy humble suit prefer,
 And owe thy country and thy friends to her."

With that the goddess deign'd no longer stay,
 But o'er the world of waters wing'd her way : 100
 Forsaking Scheria's ever-pleasing shore,
 The winds to Marathon the virgin bore ;
 Thence, where proud Athens rears her towery head,
 With opening streets and shining structures spread,
 She pass'd, delighted with the well-known seats ;
 And to Erectheus' sacred dome retreats. 106

Meanwhile Ulysses at the palace waits,
 There stops, and anxious with his soul debates,
 Fix'd in amaze before the royal gates.
 The front appear'd with radiant splendours gay, 110
 Bright as the lamp of night, or orb of day.
 The walls were massy brass : the cornice high
 Blue metals crown'd, in colours of the sky ;
 Rich plates of gold the folding doors incase ;
 The pillars silver, on a brazen base ; 115
 Silver the lintels deep-projecting o'er,
 And gold, the ringlets that command the door.
 Two rows of stately dogs on either hand,
 In sculptured gold and labour'd silver stand.
 These Vulcan form'd with art divine, to wait 120
 Immortal guardians at Alcinous' gate ;
 Alive each animated frame appears,
 And still to live beyond the power of years.
 Fair thrones within from space to space were raised,
 Where various carpets with embroidery blazed, 125
 The work of matrons : these the princes press'd,
 Day following day, a long continued feast.
 Refulgent pedestals the walls surround,
 Which boys of gold with flaming torches crown'd ;

The polish'd ore, reflecting every ray, 130
Blazed on the banquets with a double day.
Full fifty handmaids form the household train ;
Some turn the mill, or sift the golden grain ;
Some ply the loom ; their busy fingers move
Like poplar leaves when Zephyr fans the grove. 135
Not more renown'd the men of Scheria's isle,
For sailing arts and all the naval toil,
Than works of female skill their women's pride,
The flying shuttle through the threads to guide :
Pallas to these her double gifts imparts, 140
Inventive genius, and industrious arts.

Close to the gates a spacious garden lies,
From storms defended and inclement skies.
Four acres was the allotted space of ground,
Fenced with a green enclosure all around. 145
Tall thriving trees confess'd the fruitful mould ;
The reddening apple ripens here to gold.
Here the blue fig with luscious juice o'erflows,
With deeper red the full pomegranate glows,
The branch here bends beneath the weighty pear,
And verdant olives flourish round the year. 151
The balmy spirit of the western gale
Eternal breathes on fruits, untaught to fail :
Each dropping pear a following pear supplies :
On apples apples, figs on figs arise : 155
The same mild season gives the blooms to blow,
The buds to harden, and the fruits to grow.

Here order'd vines in equal ranks appear,
With all the united labours of the year ;
Some to unload the fertile branches run, 160
Some dry the blackening clusters in the sun,
Others to tread the liquid harvest join,
The groaning presses foam with floods of wine.
Here are the wines in early flower descried,
Here grapes discolour'd on the sunny side, 165
And there in autumn's richest purple died.

Beds of all various herbs, for ever green,
In beauteous order terminate the scene.

Two plenteous fountains the whole prospect
crown'd: 169

This through the gardens leads its streams around,
Visits each plant, and waters all the ground;
While that in pipes beneath the palace flows,
And thence its current on the town bestows:
To various use their various streams they bring,
The people one, and one supplies the king. 175

Such were the glories which the gods ordain'd
To grace Alcinous, and his happy land.
Ev'n from the chief whom men and nations knew,
The unwonted scene surprise and rapture drew;
In pleasing thought he ran the prospect o'er, 180
Then hasty enter'd at the lofty door.

Night now approaching, in the palace stand,
With goblets crown'd, the rulers of the land;
Prepared for rest, and offering to the god
Who bears the virtue of the sleepy rod. 185

Unseen he glided through the joyous crowd,
With darkness circled, and an ambient cloud.

Direct to great Alcinous' throne he came,
And prostrate fell before the imperial dame.
Then from around him dropp'd the veil of night;
Sudden he shines, and manifest to sight. 191

The nobles gaze, with awful fear oppress'd;
Silent they gaze, and eye the godlike guest.

"Daughter of great Rhexenor!" thus began,
Low at her knees the much-enduring man; 195

"To thee, thy consort, and this royal train,
To all that share the blessings of your reign,
A suppliant bends: oh pity human wo!
'Tis what the happy to the unhappy owe.

A wretched exile to his country send, 200
Long worn with griefs, and long without a friend.

So may the gods your better days increase,
And all your joys descend on all your race;
So reign for ever on your country's breast,
Your people blessing, by your people bless'd!" 205

Then to the genial hearth he bow'd his face,
And humbled in the ashes took his place.
Silence ensued. The eldest first began,
Echeneus sage, a venerable man!
Whose well-taught mind the present age surpass'd,
And join'd to that the experience of the last. 211
Fit words attended on his weighty sense,
And mild persuasion flow'd in eloquence.

"Oh sight," he cried, "dishonest and unjust!
A guest, a stranger, seated in the dust! 215
To raise the lowly suppliant from the ground
Befits a monarch. Lo! the peers around
But wait thy word, the gentle guest to grace,
And seat him fair in some distinguish'd place.
Let first the herald due libation pay 220
To Jove, who guides the wanderer on his way;
Then set the genial banquet in his view,
And give the stranger guest a stranger's due."

His sage advice the listening king obeys,
He stretch'd his hand the prudent chief to raise, 225
And from his seat Laodamas removed;
(The monarch's offspring, and his best beloved;)
There next his side the godlike hero sat;
With stars of silver shone the bed of state,
The golden ewer a beauteous handmaid brings, 230
Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs,
Whose polish'd vase with copious streams supplies
A silver laver of capacious size.
The table next in regal order spread,
The glittering canisters are heap'd with bread: 235
Viands of various kinds invite the taste,
Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast!
Thus feasting high, Alcinous gave the sign,
And bade the herald pour the rosy wine.
"Let all around the due libation pay 240
To Jove, who guides the wanderer on his way."

He said. Protonous heard the king's command;
The circling goblet moves from hand to hand:

Each drinks the juice that glads the heart of man.
Alcinous then, with aspect mild, began : 245

“Princes and peers, attend ; while we impart
To you the thoughts of no inhuman heart.
Now pleased and satiate from the social rite
Repair we to the blessings of the night ;
But with the rising day, assembled here, 250
Let all the elders of the land appear,
Pious observe our hospitable laws,
And Heaven propitiate in the stranger’s cause :
Then join’d in council, proper means explore
Safe to transport him to the wish’d-for shore : 255
(How distant that, imports not us to know,
Nor weigh the labour, but relieve the wo.)
Meantime, nor harm nor anguish let him bear :
This interval, Heaven trusts him to our care ;
But to his native land our charge resign’d, 260
Heaven’s is his life to come, and all the woes behind.
Then must he suffer what the fates ordain ;
For fate has wove the thread of life with pain,
And twins ev’n from the birth are misery and man !

“But if, descending from the Olympian bower,
Gracious approach us some immortal power ; 266
If in that form thou comest a guest divine ;
Some high event the conscious gods design.
As yet, unbid they never graced our feast,
The solemn sacrifice call’d down the guest ; 270
Then manifest of heaven the vision stood,
And to our eyes familiar was the god.
Oft with some favour’d traveller they stray,
And shine before him all the desert way ;
With social intercourse, and face to face, 275
The friends and guardians of our pious race.
So near approach we their celestial kind,
By justice, truth, and probity of mind ;
As our dire neighbours of Cyclopean birth
Match in fierce wrong the giant sons of earth.” 280

“Let no such thought,” with modest grace rejoin’d
The prudent Greek, “possess the royal mind.

Alas ! a mortal, like thyself, am I ;
No glorious native of yon azure sky :
In form, ah how unlike their heavenly kind ! 285
How more inferior in the gifts of mind !
Alas, a mortal ! most oppress'd of those
Whom fate has loaded with a weight of woes ;
By a sad train of miseries alone
Distinguish'd long, and second now to none ! 290
By Heaven's high will compell'd from shore to
shore ;
With Heaven's high will prepared to suffer more.
What histories of toil could I declare !
But still long-wearied nature wants repair ;
Spent with fatigue, and shrunk with pining fast, 295
My craving bowels still require repast.
Howe'er the noble, suffering mind may grieve
Its load of anguish, and disdain to live,
Necessity demands our daily bread ;
Hunger is insolent, and will be fed. 300
But finish, oh ye peers ! what you propose,
And let the morrow's dawn conclude my woes.
Pleased will I suffer all the gods ordain,
To see my soil, my son, my friends, again.
That view vouchsafed, let instant death surprise 305
With ever-during shade these happy eyes !"
The assembled peers with general praise approved
His pleaded reason, and the suit he moved.
Each drinks a full oblivion of his cares,
And to the gifts of balmy sleep repairs. 310
Ulysses in the regal walls alone
Remain'd : beside him, on a splendid throne,
Divine Arete and Alcinous shone.
The queen, on nearer view, the guest survey'd,
Robed in the garments her own hands had made,
Not without wonder seen. Then thus began, 316
Her words addressing to the godlike man :
" Camest thou not hither, wondrous stranger ! say,
From lands remote, and o'er a length of sea ?

Tell whence art thou; and whence that princely
air; 320

And robes like these, so recent and so fair?"

"Hard is the task, oh princess! you impose,"

Thus sighing spoke the man of many woes;

"The long, the mournful series to relate

Of all my sorrows sent by Heaven and fate! 325

Yet what you ask, attend. An island lies

Beyond these tracts, and under other skies,

Ogygia named, in Ocean's watery arms,

Where dwells Calypso, dreadful in her charms!

Remote from gods or men she holds her reign, 330

Amid the terrors of the rolling main.

Me, only me, the hand of fortune bore,

Unbless'd! to tread that interdicted shore:

When Jove tremendous in the sable deeps

Launch'd his red lightning at our scatter'd ships;

Then, all my fleet, and all my followers lost, 336

Sole on a plank, on boiling surges toss'd,

Heaven drove my wreck the Ogygian isle to find,

Full nine days floating to the wave and wind.

Met by the goddess there with open arms, 340

She bribed my stay with more than human charms;

Nay, promised, vainly promised, to bestow

Immortal life, exempt from age and wo:

But all her blandishments successful prove,

To banish from my breast my country's love. 345

I stay reluctant seven continued years,

And water her ambrosial couch with tears.

The eighth she voluntary moves to part,

Or urged by Jove, or her own changeful heart.

A raft was form'd to cross the surging sea; 350

Herself supplied the stores and rich array,

And gave the gales to waft me on the way.

In seventeen days appear'd your pleasing coast,

And woody mountains half in vapours lost.

Joy touch'd my soul: my soul was joy'd in vain,

For angry Neptune roused the raging main; 356

The wild winds whistle, and the billows roar ;
The splitting raft the furious tempest tore ;
And storms vindictive intercept the shore.
Soon as their rage subsides, the seas I brave 360
With naked force, and shoot along the wave,
To reach this isle ; but there my hopes were lost,
The surge impell'd me on a craggy coast.
I chose the safer sea, and chanced to find
A river's mouth impervious to the wind, 365
And clear of rocks. I fainted by the flood ;
Then took the shelter of the neighbouring wood.
'Twas night, and cover'd in the foliage deep,
Jove plunged my senses in the death of sleep.
All night I slept, oblivious of my pain: 370
Aurora dawn'd and Phœbus shined in vain,
Nor, till oblique he sloped his evening ray,
Had Somnus dried the balmy dew's away.
Then female voices from the shore I heard :
A maid amid them, goddesslike, appear'd ; 375
To her I sued, she pitied my distress ;
Like thee in beauty, nor in virtue less.
Who from such youth could hope considerate care ?
In youth and beauty wisdom is but rare !
She gave me life, relieved with just supplies 380
My wants, and lent these robes that strike your eyes.
This is the truth : and oh, ye powers on high !
Forbid that want should sink me to a lie."
To this the king : " Our daughter but express'd
Her cares imperfect to our godlike guest. 385
Suppliant to her, since first he chose to pray,
Why not herself did she conduct the way,
And with her handmaids to our court convey ?"
" Hero and king !" Ulysses thus replied,
" Nor blame her faultless, nor suspect of pride : 390
She bade me follow in the attendant train ;
But fear and reverence did my steps detain,
Lest rash suspicion might alarm thy mind :
Man's of a jealous and mistaking kind."

“Far from my soul,” he cried, “the gods efface
 All wrath ill grounded, and suspicion base ! 396
 Whate’er is honest, stranger, I approve,
 And would to Phœbus, Pallas, and to Jove,
 Such as thou art, thy thought and mine were one,
 Nor thou unwilling to be call’d my son. 400
 In such alliance couldst thou wish to join,
 A palace stored with treasures should be thine.
 But if reluctant, who shall force thy stay ?
 Jove bids to set the stranger on his way,
 And ships shall wait thee with the morning ray. 405
 Till then, let slumber close thy careful eyes
 The wakeful mariners shall watch the skies,
 And seize the moment when the breezes rise :
 Then gently waft thee to the pleasing shore,
 Where thy soul rests, and labour is no more. 410
 Far as Eubœa though thy country lay,
 Our ships with ease transport thee in a day.
 Thither of old, earth’s giant son to view,
 On wings of winds with Rhadamanth they flew ;
 This land, from whence their morning course begun,
 Saw them returning with the setting sun. 416
 Your eyes shall witness and confirm my tale,
 Our youth how dextrous and how fleet our sail,
 When justly timed with equal sweep they row,
 And ocean whitens in long tracks below.” 420
 Thus he. No word the experienced man replies,
 But thus to heaven, and heavenward lifts his eyes :
 “Oh Jove ! oh father ! what the king accords
 Do thou make perfect ! sacred be his words !
 Wide o’er the world Alcinous’ glory shine ! 425
 Let fame be his, and ah ! my country mine !”
 Meantime Arete, for the hour of rest,
 Ordains the fleecy couch and covering vest ;
 Bids her fair train the purple quilts prepare,
 And the thick carpets spread with busy care. 430

With torches blazing in their hands they pass'd,
And finish'd all their queen's command with haste;
Then gave the signal to the willing guest :
He rose with pleasure, and retired to rest.
There, soft extended, to the murmuring sound 435
Of the high porch, Ulysses sleeps profound !
Within, released from cares, Alcinous lies ;
And fast beside were closed Arete's eyes.

BOOK VIII.

ARGUMENT.

ALCINOUS calls a council, in which it is resolved to transport Ulysses into his country—After which, splendid entertainments are made, where the celebrated musician and poet Demodocus plays and sings to the guests—They next proceed to the games, the race, the wrestling, discus, &c., where Ulysses casts a prodigious length, to the admiration of all the spectators—They return again to the banquet, and Demodocus sings the loves of Mars and Venus—Ulysses, after a compliment to the poet, desires him to sing the introduction of the wooden horse into Troy ; which subject provoking his tears, Alcinous inquires of his guest his name, parentage, and fortunes.

Now fair Aurora lifts her golden ray,
And all the ruddy orient flames with day :
Alcinous and the chief, with dawning light,
Rose instant from the slumbers of the night :
Then to the council seat they bend their way, 5
And fill the shining thrones along the bay.

Meanwhile Minerva in her guardian care,
Shoots from the starry vault through fields of air ;
In form a herald of the king she flies
From peer to peer, and thus incessant cries : 10

“ Nobles and chiefs who rule Phæacia’s states,
The king in council your attendance waits ;
A prince of grace divine your aid implores,
O’er unknown seas arrived from unknown shores.”

She spoke, and sudden with tumultuous sounds 15
Of thronging multitudes the shore rebounds :
At once the seats they fill ; and every eye
Gazed, as before some brother of the sky.

Pallas with grace divine his form improves,
 More high he treads, and more enlarged he moves;
 She sheds celestial bloom, regard to draw, 21
 And gives a dignity of mien, to awe;
 With strength, the future prize of fame to play,
 And gather all the honours of the day.

Then from his glittering throne Alcinous rose : 25
 "Attend," he cried, "while we our will disclose.
 Your present aid this godlike stranger craves,
 Toss'd by rude tempests through a war of waves:
 Perhaps from realms that view the rising day,
 Or nations subject to the western ray. 30
 Then grant, what here all sons of wo obtain :
 (For here affliction never pleads in vain :)
 Be chosen youths prepared, expert to try
 The vast profound, and bid the vessel fly :
 Launch the tall bark, and order every oar ; 35
 Then in our court indulge the genial hour.
 Instant, you sailors, to this task attend ;
 Swift to the palace, all ye peers, ascend ;
 Let none to strangers honours due disclaim :
 Be there Demodocus the bard of fame, 40
 Taught by the gods to please, when high he sings
 The vocal lay, responsive to the strings."

Thus spoke the prince : the attending peers obey ;
 In state they move ; Alcinous leads the way :
 Swift to Demodocus the herald flies, 45
 At once the sailors to their charge arise :
 They launch the vessel, and unfurl the sails,
 And stretch the swelling canvass to the gales ;
 Then to the palace move : a gathering throng,
 Youth, and white age, tumultuous pour along. 50
 Now all accesses to the dome are fill'd ;
 Eight boars, the choicest of the herd, are kill'd ;
 Two beeves, twelve fatlings, from the flock they
 bring
 To crown the feast ; so wills the bounteous king.
 The herald now arrives, and guides along 55
 The sacred master of celestial song ;

Dear to the muse ! who gave his days to flow
 With mighty blessings, mix'd with mighty wo ;
 With clouds of darkness quench'd his visual ray,
 But gave him skill to raise the lofty lay. 60

High on a radiant throne sublime in state,
 Encircled by huge multitudes, he sat :
 With silver shone the throne : his lyre well strung
 To rapturous sounds, at hand Pontonous hung :
 Before his seat a polish'd table shines, 65
 And a full goblet foams with generous wines :
 His food a herald bore : and now they fed ;
 And now the rage of craving hunger fled.

Then, fired by all the muse, aloud he sings
 The mighty deeds of demigods and kings : 70
 From that fierce wrath the noble song arose
 That made Ulysses and Achilles foes :
 How o'er the feast they doom the fall of Troy ;
 The stern debate Atrides hears with joy :
 For Heaven foretold the contest, when he trod 75
 The marble threshold of the Delphic god,
 Curious to learn the counsels of the sky,
 Ere yet he loosed the rage of war on Troy.

Touch'd at the song, Ulysses straight resign'd
 To soft affliction all his manly mind : 80
 Before his eyes the purple vest he drew,
 Industrious to conceal the falling dew :
 But when the music paused, he ceased to shed
 The flowing tear, and raised his drooping head ;
 And, lifting to the gods a goblet crown'd, 85
 He pour'd a pure libation to the ground.

Transported with the song, the listening train
 Again with loud applause demand the strain :
 Again Ulysses veil'd his pensive head,
 Again unmann'd, a shower of sorrow shed ; 90
 Conceal'd he wept : the king observed alone
 The silent tear, and heard the secret groan ;
 Then to the bard aloud : " Oh cease to sing,
 Dumb be thy voice, and mute the harmonious string :

Enough the feast has pleased, enough the power 95
Of heavenly song has crown'd the genial hour !
Incessant in the games your strength display,
Contest, ye brave, the honours of the day !

That pleased the admiring stranger may proclaim
In distant regions the Phæacian fame : 100
None wield the gauntlet with so dire a sway,
Or swifter in the race devour the way ;
None in the leap spring with so strong a bound,
Or firmer, in the wrestling, press the ground."

Thus spoke the king ; the attending peers obey ;
In state they move, Alcinous leads the way : 106
His golden lyre Demodocus unstrung,
High on a column in the palace hung,
And, guided by a herald's guardian cares,
Majestic to the lists of fame repairs. 110

Now swarms the populace : a countless throng,
Youth and hoar age ; and man drives man along.
The games begin : ambitious of the prize,
Acronæus, Thoon, and Eretmeus rise ;
The prize Ocyalus and Prymneus claim, 115
Anchialus and Panteus, chiefs of fame.
There Proreus, Nautes, Eratreus, appear,
And famed Amphialus, Polyneus' heir ;
Euryalus, like Mars, terrific rose,
When clad in wrath he withers hosts of foes ; 120
Naubolides with grace unequall'd shone,
Or equall'd by Laodamas alone.

With these came forth Ambasiæus the strong ;
And three brave sons, from great Alcinous sprung.

Ranged in a line the ready racers stand, 125
Start from the goal, and vanish o'er the strand :
Swift as on wings of winds, upborne they fly,
And drifts of rising dust involve the sky.
Before the rest, what space the hinds allow
Between the mule and ox, from plough to plough ;
Clytonius sprung : he wing'd the rapid way, 131
And bore the unrivall'd honours of the day.
With fierce embrace the brawny wrestlers join ;

The conquest, great Euryalus, is thine.
 Amphialus sprung forward with a bound, 135
 Superior in the leap, a length of ground.
 From Elatreus' strong arm the discus flies,
 And sings with unmatch'd force along the skies.
 And Laodam whirls high, with dreadful sway,
 The gloves of death, victorious in the fray. 140

While thus the peerage in the games contends,
 In act to speak, Laodamas ascends :
 "Oh friends," he cries, "the stranger seems well
 skill'd

To try the illustrious labours of the field :
 I deem him brave : then grant the brave man's claim,
 Invite the hero to his share of fame. 146
 What nervous arms he boasts ! how firm his tread !
 His limbs how turn'd ! how broad his shoulders
 spread !

By age unbroke !—but all-consuming care
 Destroys perhaps the strength that time would spare :
 Dire is the ocean, dread in all its forms ! 151
 Man must decay, when man contends with storms."

"Well hast thou spoke," Euryalus replies ;
 "Thine is the guest, invite thou him to rise."
 Swift at the word advancing from the crowd 155
 He made obeisance, and thus spoke aloud :

"Vouchsafes the reverend stranger to display
 His manly worth, and share the glorious day ?
 Father, arise ! for thee thy port proclaims
 Expert to conquer in the solemn games. 160
 To fame arise ! for what more fame can yield
 Than the swift race, or conflict of the field ?
 Steal from corroding care one transient day,
 To glory give the space thou hast to stay :
 Short is the time, and lo ! even now the gales 165
 Call thee aboard, and stretch the swelling sails."

To whom with sighs Ulysses gave reply :
 "Ah, why the ill-suiting pastime must I try ?
 To gloomy care my thoughts alone are free ;
 Ill the gay sports with troubled hearts agree : 170

Sad from my natal hour my days have ran,
A much-afflicted, much-enduring man !
Who suppliant to the king and peers, implores
A speedy voyage to his native shores."

" Wide wanders, Laodam, thy erring tongue, 175
The sports of glory to the brave belong,"
Retorts Euryalus : " he boasts no claim
Among the great, unlike the sons of fame.
A wandering merchant, he frequents the main ;
Some mean sea-farer in pursuit of gain ; 180
Studious of freight, in naval trade well skill'd,
But dreads the athletic labours of the field."

Incensed Ulysses with a frown replies :
" Oh forward to proclaim thy soul unwise !
With partial hands the gods their gifts dispense ; 185
Some greatly think, some speak with manly sense :
Here Heaven an elegance of form denies,
But wisdom the defect of form supplies :
This man with energy of thought controls,
And steals with modest violence our souls ; 190
He speaks reservedly, but he speaks with force,
Nor can one word be changed but for a worse ;
In public more than mortal he appears,
And, as he moves, the gazing crowd reveres.
While others, beauteous as the ethereal kind, 195
The nobler portion want, a knowing mind.
In outward show Heaven gives thee to excel,
But Heaven denies the praise of thinking well.
Ill bear the brave a rude ungovern'd tongue,
And, youth, my generous soul resents the wrong :
Skill'd in heroic exercise, I claim 201
A post of honour with the sons of fame.
Such was my boast while vigour crown'd my days,
Now care surrounds me, and my force decays ;
Inured a melancholy part to bear, 205
In scenes of death by tempest and by war.
Yet thus by woes impair'd, no more I wave
To prove the hero—slander stings the brave "

Then striding forward with a furious bound,
 He wrench'd a rocky fragment from the ground, 210
 By far more ponderous, and more huge by far,
 Than what Phæacia's sons discharged in air.
 Fierce from his arm the enormous load he flings ;
 Sonorous through the shaded air it sings ;
 Couch'd to the earth, tempestuous as it flies, 215
 The crowd gaze upward while it cleaves the skies.
 Beyond all marks, with many a giddy round
 Down rushing, it upturns a hill of ground.

That instant Pallas, bursting from a cloud,
 Fix'd a distinguish'd mark, and cried aloud : 220

“ Ev'n he who sightless wants his visual ray
 May by his touch alone award the day :
 Thy signal throw transcends the utmost bound
 Of every champion by a length of ground :
 Securely bid the strongest of the train 225
 Arise to throw ; the strongest throws in vain.”

She spoke ; and momentary mounts the sky :
 The friendly voice Ulysses hears with joy ;
 Then thus aloud, elate with decent pride :
 “ Rise, ye Phæacians, try your force,” he cried ; 230
 “ If with this throw the strongest caster vie,
 Still, farther still, I bid the discus fly.
 Stand forth, ye champions, who the gauntlet wield,
 Or ye, the swiftest racers of the field !
 Stand forth, ye wrestlers, who these pastimes grace !
 I wield the gauntlet, and I run the race. 236

In such heroic games I yield to none,
 Or yield to brave Laodamas alone :
 Shall I with brave Laodamas contend ?
 A friend is sacred, and I style him friend. 240

Ungenerous were the man, and base of heart,
 Who takes the kind, and pays the ungrateful part ;
 Chiefly the man, in foreign realms confined,
 Base to his friend, to his own interest blind :
 All, all your heroes I this day defy ; 245
 Give me a man, that we our skill may try.

Expert in every art, I boast the skill
 To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill ;
 Should a whole host at once discharge the bow,
 My well-aimed shaft with death prevents the foe :
 Alone superior in the field of Troy, 251
 Great Philoctetes taught the shaft to fly.
 From all the sons of earth unrivall'd praise
 I justly claim ; but yield to better days,
 To those famed days when great Alcides rose, 255
 And Eurytus, who bade the gods be foes.
 (Vain Eurytus, whose art became his crime,
 Swept from the earth, he perish'd in his prime ;
 Sudden the irremeable way he trod,
 Who boldly durst defy the bowyer god.) 260
 In fighting fields as far the spear I throw
 As flies an arrow from the well-drawn bow.
 Sole in the race the contest I decline,
 Stiff are my weary joints, and I resign ;
 By storms and hunger worn ; age well may fail, 265
 When storms and hunger both at once assail."

Abash'd, the numbers hear the godlike man,
 Till great Alcinous, mildly, thus began :
 " Well hast thou spoke, and well thy generous
 tongue

With decent pride refutes a public wrong : 270
 Warm are thy words, but warm without offence ;
 Fear only fools, secure in men of sense ;
 Thy worth is known. Then hear our country's claim,
 And bear to heroes our heroic fame :
 In distant realms our glorious deeds display, 275
 Repeat them frequent in the genial day ;
 When bless'd with ease thy woes and wanderings end,
 Teach them thy consort, bid thy sons attend ;
 How loved of Jove, he crown'd our sires with praise,
 How we their offspring dignify our race. 280

" Let other realms the deathful gauntlet wield,
 Or boast the glories of the athletic field ;
 We in the course unrivall'd speed display,
 Or through cerulean billows plough the way ;

To dress, to dance, to sing, our sole delight, 285
The feast or bath by day, and love by night :
Rise then, ye skill'd in measures ; let him bear
Your fame to men that breathe a distant air ;
And faithful say, to you the powers belong
To race, to sail, to dance, to chant the song. 290

“ But, herald, to the palace swift repair,
And the soft lyre to grace our pastimes bear.”

Swift at the word, obedient to the king,
The herald flies the tuneful lyre to bring.
Up rose nine seniors, chosen to survey 295
The future games, the judges of the day.

With instant care they mark a spacious round,
And level for the dance the allotted ground ;
The herald bears the lyre : intent to play,
The bard advancing meditates the lay. 300

Skill'd in the dance, tall youths, a blooming band,
Graceful before the heavenly minstrel stand :
Light bounding from the earth, at once they rise,
Their feet, half viewless, quiver in the skies :
Ulysses gazed, astonish'd to survey 305

The glancing splendours as their sandals play.
Meantime the bard, alternate to the strings,
The loves of Mars and Cytherea sings ;
How the stern god, enamour'd with her charms,
Clasp'd the gay panting goddess in his arms, 310

By bribes seduced ; and how the sun, whose eye
Views the broad heavens, disclosed the lawless joy.
Stung to the soul, indignant through the skies
To his black forge vindictive Vulcan flies :

Arrived, his sinewy arms incessant place 315
The eternal anvil on the massy base.

A wondrous net he labours, to betray
The wanton lovers, as entwined they lay,
Indissolubly strong ! Then instant bears
To his immortal dome the finish'd snares. 320
Above, below, around, with art dispread,
The sure enclosure folds the genial bed ;

Whose texture ev'n the search of gods deceives,
Thin as the filmy threads the spider weaves.
Then, as withdrawing from the starry bowers, 325
He feigns a journey to the Lemnian shores,
His favourite isle: observant Mars descries
His wish'd recess, and to the goddess flies:
He glows, he burns, the fair-hair'd queen of love
Descends smooth gliding from the courts of Jove,
Gay blooming in full charms: her hand he press'd
With eager joy, and with a sigh address'd:

“Come, my beloved, and taste the soft delights;
Come, to repose the genial bed invites:
Thy absent spouse, neglectful of thy charms, 335
Prefers the barbarous Sintians to thy arms!”

Then, nothing loath, the enamour'd fair he led,
And sunk transported on the conscious bed.
Down rush'd the toils, inwrapping as they lay
The careless lovers in their wanton play: 340
In vain they strive; the entangling snares deny
(Inextricably firm) the power to fly.

Warn'd by the god who sheds the golden day,
Stern Vulcan homeward treads the starry way:
Arrived, he sees, he grieves, with rage he burns: 345
Full horribly he roars, his voice all heaven returns.

“Oh Jove,” he cried, “oh, all ye powers above,
See the lewd dalliance of the queen of love!
Me, awkward me, she scorns; and yields her charms
To that fair lecher, the strong god of arms. 350

If I am lame, that stain my natal hour
By fate imposed; such me my parent bore.
Why was I born? See how the wanton lies!
Oh sight tormenting to a husband's eyes!

But yet, I trust, this once ev'n Mars would fly 355
His fair one's arms—he thinks her, once, too nigh.
But there remain, ye guilty, in my power,
Till Jove refunds his shameless daughter's dower.
Too dear I prized a fair enchanting face:
Beauty unchaste is beauty in disgrace.” 360

Meanwhile the gods the dome of Vulcan throng;
 Apollo comes, and Neptune comes along;
 With these gay Hermes trod the starry plain;
 But modesty withheld the goddess train.
 All heaven beholds, imprison'd as they lie, 365
 And unextinguish'd laughter shakes the sky.
 Then mutual, thus they spoke: "Behold on wrong
 Swift vengeance waits; and art subdues the strong!
 Dwells there a god on all the Olympian brow
 More swift than Mars, and more than Vulcan slow?
 Yet Vulcan conquers, and the god of arms 371
 Must pay the penalty for lawless charms."

Thus serious they: but he who gilds the skies,
 The gay Apollo, thus to Hermes cries: 374
 "Wouldst thou enchain'd like Mars, oh Hermes, lie,
 And bear the shame like Mars, to share the joy?"

"Oh envied shame!" the smiling youth rejoind;
 "Add thrice the chains, and thrice more firmly bind;
 Gaze all ye gods, and every goddess gaze,
 Yet eager would I bless the sweet disgrace." 380

Loud laugh the rest, ev'n Neptune laughs aloud,
 Yet sues importunate to loose the god:
 "And free," he cries, "oh Vulcan! free from shame
 Thy captive; I ensure the penal claim."

"Will Neptune," (Vulcan then,) "the faithless
 trust?"

He suffers who gives surety for the unjust: 386
 But say, if that lewd scandal of the sky,
 To liberty restored, perfidious fly;
 Say, wilt thou bear the mulct?" He instant cries,
 "The mulct I bear, if Mars perfidious flies." 390

To whom, appeased: "No more I urge delay;
 When Neptune sues, my part is to obey."
 Then to the snares his force the god applies:
 They burst; and Mars to Thrace indignant flies:
 To the soft Cyprian shores the goddess moves, 395
 To visit Paphos and her blooming groves,
 Where to the Power a hundred altars rise,
 And breathing odours scent the balmy skies;

Conceal'd she bathes in consecrated bowers,
The Graces unguents shed, ambrosial showers, 400
Unguents that charm the gods! she last assumes
Her wondrous robes; and full the goddess blooms.

Thus sung the bard: Ulysses hears with joy,
And loud applauses rend the vaulted sky. 404

Then to the sports his sons the king commands,
Each blooming youth before the monarch stands,
In dance unmatch'd! A wondrous ball is brought:
(The work of Polypus, divinely wrought:)
'This youth with strength enormous bids it fly,
And bending backward whirls it to the sky: 410
His brother, springing with an active bound,
At distance intercepts it from the ground.
The ball dismiss'd, in dance they skim the strand,
Turn and return, and scarce imprint the sand.
The assembly gazes with astonish'd eyes, 415
And sends in shouts applauses to the skies.

Then thus Ulysses: "Happy king, whose name
The brightest shines in all the rolls of fame!
In subjects happy! with surprise I gaze; 419
Thy praise was just; their skill transcends thy praise."

Pleased with his people's fame, the monarch hears,
And thus benevolent accosts the peers:
"Since wisdom's sacred guidance he pursues,
Give to the stranger guest a stranger's dues:
Twelve princes in our realm dominion share, 425
O'er whom supreme, imperial power I bear:
Bring gold, a pledge of love: a talent bring,
A vest, a robe, and imitate your king.
Be swift to give; that he this night may share
The social feast of joy, with joy sincere. 430
And thou, Euryalus, redeem thy wrong;
A generous heart repairs a slanderous tongue."

The assenting peers, obedient to the king,
In haste their heralds send the gifts to bring.
Then thus Euryalus: "Oh prince, whose sway 435
Rules this bless'd realm, repentant, I obey!

Be his this sword, whose blade of brass displays
 A ruddy gleam ; whose hilt a silver blaze ;
 Whose ivory sheath, inwrought with curious pride,
 Adds graceful terror to the wearer's side." 440

He said, and to his hand the sword consign'd :
 " And if," he cried, " my words affect thy mind,
 Far from thy mind those words, ye whirlwinds, bear,
 And scatter them, ye storms, in empty air ! 444
 Crown, oh ye heavens, with joy his peaceful hours,
 And grant him to his spouse, and native shores !"

" And bless'd be thou, my friend," Ulysses cries :
 " Crown him with every joy, ye favouring skies !
 To thy calm hours continued peace afford,
 And never, never mayst thou want this sword !" 450

He said, and o'er his shoulder flung the blade.
 Now o'er the earth ascends the evening shade ;
 The precious gifts the illustrious heralds bear,
 And to the court the imbodied peers repair.
 Before the queen Alcinous' sons unfold 455
 The vests, the robes, and heaps of shining gold ;
 Then to the radiant thrones they move in state :
 Aloft, the king in pomp imperial sat.

Thence to the queen : " Oh partner of our reign,
 Oh sole beloved ! command thy menial train 460
 A polish'd chest and stately robes to bear,
 And healing waters for the bath prepare ;
 That bathed, our guest may bid his sorrows cease,
 Hear the sweet song, and taste the feast in peace.
 A bowl that flames with gold, of wondrous frame,
 Ourselves we give, memorial of our name ; 466
 To raise in offerings to almighty Jove,
 And every god that treads the courts above."

Instant the queen, observant of the king,
 Commands her train a spacious vase to bring, 470
 The spacious vase with ample streams suffice,
 Heap high the wood, and bid the flames arise.
 The flames climb round it with a fierce embrace,
 The fuming waters bubble o'er the blaze.

Herself the chest prepares ; in order roll'd 475
 The robes, the vests are ranged, and heaps of gold :
 And adding a rich dress inwrought with art,
 A gift expressive of her bounteous heart,
 Thus spoke to Ithacus : " To guard with bands
 Insolvable these gifts, thy care demands ; 480
 Lest, in thy slumbers on the watery main,
 The hand of rapine make our bounty vain."

Then bending with full force, around he roll'd
 A labyrinth of bands in fold on fold,
 Closed with Circæan art. A train attends 485
 Around the bath : the bath the king ascends ;
 (Untasted joy, since that disastrous hour,
 He sail'd ill fated from Calypso's bower ;)
 Where, happy as the gods that range the sky,
 He feasted every sense, with every joy. 490
 He bathes ; the damsels, with officious toil,
 Shed sweets, shed unguents, in a shower of oil :
 Then o'er his limbs a gorgeous robe he spreads,
 And to the feast magnificently treads.
 Full where the dome its shining valves expands, 495
 Nausicaa blooming as a goddess stands ;
 With wondering eyes the hero she survey'd,
 And graceful thus began the royal maid :

" Hail, godlike stranger ! and when Heaven re-
 stores
 To thy fond wish thy long-expected shores, 500
 This ever grateful in remembrance bear—
 To me thou ow'st, to me, the vital air."

" Oh royal maid," Ulysses straight returns,
 " Whose worth the splendours of thy race adorns,
 So may dread Jove (whose arm in vengeance forms
 The writen bolt ; and blackens heaven with storms)
 Restore me safe, through weary wanderings toss'd,
 To my dear country's ever-pleasing coast,
 As while the spirit in this bosom glows,
 To thee, my goddess, I address my vows ; 510
 My life, thy gift I boast." He said, and sat
 Fast by Alcinous on a throne of state.

Now each partakes the feast, the wine prepares,
Portions the food, and each his portion shares.

The bard a herald guides : the gazing throng 515
Pay low obeisance as he moves along :

Beneath a sculptured arch he sits enthroned,
The peers encircling form an awful round.
Then, from the chine, Ulysses carves with art
Delicious food, an honorary part ; 520

“ This, let the master of the lyre receive,
A pledge of love ! ’tis all a wretch can give.
Lives there a man beneath the spacious skies
Who sacred honours to the bard denies ?

The muse the bard inspires, exalts his mind ; 525
The muse indulgent loves the harmonious kind.”

The herald to his hand the charge conveys,
Not fond of flattery, nor unpleased with praise.

When now the rage of hunger was allay’d,
Thus to the lyrist wise Ulysses said : 530

“ Oh more than man ! thy soul the muse inspires,
Or Phœbus animates with all his fires ;
For who, by Phœbus uninform’d, could know
The wo of Greece, and sing so well the wo ?
Just to the tale, as present at the fray, 535

Or taught the labours of the dreadful day :
The song recalls past horrors to my eyes,
And bids proud Ilion from her ashes rise.
Once more harmonious strike the sounding string,
The Epæan fabric, framed by Pallas, sing : 540

How stern Ulysses, furious to destroy,
With latent heroes sack’d imperial Troy.
If faithful thou record the tale of fame,
The god himself inspires thy breast with flame ;
And mine shall be the task henceforth to raise 545
In every land thy monument of praise.”

Full of the god, he raised his lofty strain,
How the Greeks rush’d tumultuous to the main ;
How blazing tents illumined half the skies,
While from the shores the winged navy flies ; 550

How ev'n in Ilion's walls, in deathful bands,
 Came the stern Greeks by Troy's assisting hands :
 All Troy up-heaved the steed ; of differing mind,
 Various the Trojans counsell'd ; part consign'd
 The monster to the sword, part sentence gave 555
 To plunge it headlong in the whelming wave ;
 The unwise award to lodge it in the towers,
 An offering sacred to the immortal powers :
 The unwise prevail, they lodge it in the walls,
 And by the gods' decree proud Ilion falls : 560
 Destruction enters in the treacherous wood,
 And vengeful slaughter, fierce for human blood.

He sung the Greeks stern issuing from the steed,
 How Ilion burns, how all her fathers bleed ;
 How to thy dome, Deiphobus ! ascends 565
 The Spartan king ; how Ithacus attends,
 (Horrid as Mars,) and how with dire alarms
 He fights, subdues : for Pallas strings his arms.

Thus while he sung, Ulysses' griefs renew,
 Tears bathe his cheeks, and tears the ground be-
 deen : 570

As some fond matron views in mortal fight
 Her husband falling in his country's right :
 Frantic through clashing swords she runs, she flies,
 As ghastly pale he groans, and faints, and dies ;
 Close to his breast she grovels on the ground, 575
 And bathes with floods of tears the gaping wound :
 She cries, she shrieks ; the fierce insulting foe
 Relentless mocks her violence of wo ;
 To chains condemn'd, as wildly she deploras ;
 A widow, and a slave on foreign shores. 580

So from the sluices of Ulysses' eyes
 Fast fell the tears, and sighs succeeded sighs :
 Conceal'd he grieved : the king observed alone
 The silent tear, and heard the secret groan ;
 Then to the bard aloud : " Oh cease to sing, 585
 Dumb be thy voice, and mute the tuneful string ;
 To every note his tears responsive flow,
 And his great heart heaves with tumultuous wo ;

Thy lay too deeply moves ; then cease the lay,
 And o'er the banquet every heart be gay : 590
 This social right demands : for him the sails,
 Floating in air, invite the impelling gales.
 His are the gifts of love : the wise and good
 Receive the stranger as a brother's blood.

“ But, friend, discover faithful what I crave ; 595
 Artful concealment ill becomes the brave ;
 Say what thy birth, and what the name you bore,
 Imposed by parents in the natal hour ?
 (For from the natal hour distinctive names,
 One common right, the great and lowly claims :) 600
 Say from what city, from what regions toss'd,
 And what inhabitants those regions boast ?
 So shalt thou instant reach the realm assign'd,
 In wondrous ships, self-moved, instinct with mind ;
 No helm secures their course, no pilot guides ; 605
 Like man intelligent, they plough the tides,
 Conscious of every coast, and every bay,
 That lies beneath the sun's all piercing ray ;
 Though clouds and darkness veil the encumber'd sky,
 Fearless through darkness and through clouds they
 fly : 610

Though tempests rage, though rolls the swelling
 main,
 The seas may roll, the tempests rage in vain ;
 Ev'n the stern god that o'er the waves presides,
 Safe as they pass, and safe repass the tides,
 With fury burns ; while careless they convey 615
 Promiscuous every guest to every bay.
 These ears have heard my royal sire disclose
 A dreadful story, big with future woes,
 How Neptune raged, and how, by his command,
 Firm rooted in a surge, a ship should stand 620
 A monument of wrath ; how mound on mound
 Should bury these proud towers beneath the ground.
 But this the gods may frustrate or fulfil,
 As suits the purpose of the eternal will.

But say through what waste regions hast thou
stray'd, 625

What customs noted, and what coasts survey'd ;

Possess'd by wild barbarians fierce in arms,

Or men, whose bosoms tender pity warms ?

Say why the fate of Troy awak'd thy cares,

Why heav'd thy bosom, and why flow'd thy
tears ? 630

Just are the ways of Heaven ; from Heaven proceed

The woes of man ; Heaven doom'd the Greeks to
bleed,

A theme of future song ! Say then, if slain

Some dear-loved brother press'd the Phrygian plain ?

Or bled some friend, who bore a brother's part, 635

And claim'd by merit, not by blood, the heart ? ”

BOOK IX.

ARGUMENT.

The Adventures of the Cicons, Lotophagi, and Cyclops.

ULYSSES begins the relation of his adventures; how, after the destruction of Troy, he, with his companions, made an incursion on the Cicans, by whom they were repulsed; and meeting with a storm, were driven to the coast of the Lotophagi—From thence they sailed to the land of the Cyclops, whose manners and situation are particularly characterized—The giant Polyphemus and his cave described; the usage Ulysses and his companions met with there; and lastly, the method and artifice by which he escaped.

THEN thus Ulysses : " Thou whom first in sway,
 As first in virtue, these thy realms obey ;
 How sweet the products of a peaceful reign ;
 The heaven-taught poet and enchanting strain ;
 The well-fill'd palace, the perpetual feast, 5
 A land rejoicing, and a people bless'd !
 How goodly seems it ever to employ
 Man's social days in union and in joy ;
 The plenteous board high-heap'd with cates divine,
 And o'er the foaming bowl the laughing wine ! 10

"Amid these joys, why seeks thy mind to know
 The unhappy series of a wanderer's wo?
 Remembrance, sad, whose image to review,
 Alas! must open all my wounds anew!
 And oh, what first, what last shall I relate, 15
 Of woes unnumber'd sent by Heaven and fate?

“Know first the man (though now a wretch dis-
tress’d)
Who hopes thee, monarch, for his future guest.

Behold Ulysses ! no ignoble name,
Earth sounds my wisdom, and high heaven my fame.

“ My native soil is Ithaca the fair, 21
Where high Neritus waves his woods in air ;
Dulichium, Same, and Zacynthus crown'd
With shady mountains, spread their isles around :
(These to the north and night's dark regions run, 25
Those to Aurora and the rising sun.)

Low lies our isle, yet bless'd in fruitful stores ;
Strong are her sons, though rocky are her shores .
And none, ah none so lovely to my sight,
Of all the lands that Heaven o'erspreads with light !
In vain Calypso long constrain'd my stay, 31

With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay ;
With all her charms as vainly Circe strove,
And added magic to secure my love .
In pomps or joys, the palace or the grot, 35
My country's image never was forgot,
My absent parents rose before my sight,
And distant lay contentment and delight.

“ Hear then the woes which mighty Jove ordain'd
To wait my passage from the Trojan land. 40
The winds from Ilion to the Cicons' shore,
Beneath cold Ismarus, our vessels bore .
We boldly landed on the hostile place,
And sack'd the city, and destroy'd the race ;
Their wives made captive, their possessions shared,
And every soldier found a like reward. 46

I then advised to fly ; not so the rest,
Who staid to revel, and prolong the feast :
The fatted sheep and sable bulls they slay,
And bowls flow round, and riot wastes the day. 50
Meantime the Cicons, to their holds retired,
Call on the Cicons, with new fury fired ;
With early morn the gather'd country swarms,
And all the continent is bright with arms ;
Thick as the budding leaves or rising flowers 55
O'erspread the land, when spring descends in show-
ers :

All expert soldiers, skill'd on foot to dare,
Or from the bounding courser urge the war.
Now fortune changes; (so the fates ordain;) 60
Our hour was come to taste our share of pain.
Close at the ships the bloody fight began,
Wounded they wound, and man expires on man.
Long as the morning sun increasing bright
O'er heaven's pure azure spread the growing light,
Promiscuous death the form of war confounds, 65
Each adverse battle gored with equal wounds:
But when his evening wheels o'erhung the main,
Then conquest crown'd the fierce Ciconian train.
Six brave companions from each ship we lost,
The rest escape in haste, and quit the coast. 70
With sails outspread we fly the unequal strife,
Sad for their loss, but joyful of our life.
Yet as we fled, our fellows' rites we paid,
And thrice we call'd on each unhappy shade.

“Meanwhile the god whose hand the thunder forms
Drives clouds on clouds, and blackens heaven with
storms; 76

Wide o'er the waste the rage of Boreas sweeps,
And night rush'd headlong on the shaded deeps.
Now here, now there the giddy ships are borne,
And all the rattling shrouds in fragments torn. 80
We furl'd the sail, we plied the labouring oar,
Took down our masts, and row'd our ships to shore.
Two tedious days and two long nights we lay,
O'erwatch'd and batter'd in the naked bay.
But the third morning when Aurora brings, 85
We rear the masts, we spread the canvass wings;
Refresh'd, and careless on the deck reclined,
We sit, and trust the pilot and the wind.
Then to my native country had I sail'd;
But the cape doubled, adverse winds prevail'd, 90
Strong was the tide, which, by the northern blast
Impell'd, our vessels on Cythera cast.
Nine days our fleet the uncertain tempest bore
Far in wide ocean, and from sight of shore:

The tenth we touch'd, by various errors toss'd, 95
The land of Lotos and the flowery coast.
We climb'd the beach, and springs of water found,
Then spread our hasty banquet on the ground.
Three men were sent, deputed from the crew,
(A herald one,) the dubious coast to view, 100
And learn what habitants possess'd the place.
They went, and found a hospitable race :
Not prone to ill, nor strange to foreign guest,
They eat, they drink, and nature gives the feast ;
The trees around them all their food produce ; 105
Lotos, the name ; divine nectareous juice !
(Thence called Lotophagi ;) which whoso tastes,
Insatiate riots in the sweet repasts,
Nor other home, nor other care intends,
But quits his house, his country, and his friends. 110
The three we sent, from off the enchanting ground
We dragg'd reluctant, and by force we bound :
The rest in haste forsook the pleasing shore,
Or, the charm tasted, had return'd no more.
Now placed in order on their banks, they sweep 115
The sea's smooth face, and cleave the hoary deep ;
With heavy hearts we labour through the tide,
To coasts unknown, and oceans yet untried.
“ The land of Cyclops first, a savage kind,
Nor tamed by manners, nor by laws confined : 120
Untaught to plant, to turn the glebe and sow ;
They all their products to free nature owe.
The soil untill'd a ready harvest yields,
With wheat and barley wave the golden fields ;
Spontaneous wines from weighty clusters pour, 125
And Jove descends in each prolific shower.
By these no statutes and no rights are known,
No council held, no monarch fills the throne,
But high on hills, or airy cliffs, they dwell,
Or deep in caves whose entrance leads to hell. 130
Each rules his race, his neighbour not his care,
Heedless of others, to his own severe.

“ Opposed to the Cyclopean coasts, there lay
An isle, whose hills their subject fields survey ;
Its name Lachæa, crown'd with many a grove, 135
Where savage goats through pathless thickets rove :
No needy mortals here, with hunger bold,
Or wretched hunters through the wintry cold
Pursue their flight ; but leave them safe to bound
From hill to hill, o'er all the desert ground. 140
Nor knows the soil to feed the fleecy care,
Or feels the labours of the crooked share ;
But uninhabited, untill'd, unsown
It lies, and breeds the bleating goat alone.
For there no vessel with vermilion prore, 145
Or bark of traffic, glides from shore to shore ;
The rugged race of savages, unskill'd
The seas to traverse, or the ships to build,
Gaze on the coast, nor cultivate the soil ;
Unlearn'd in all the industrious arts of toil. 150
Yet here all products and all plants abound,
Sprung from the fruitful genius of the ground ;
Fields waving high with heavy crops are seen,
And vines that flourish in eternal green,
Refreshing meads along the murmuring main, 155
And fountains streaming down the fruitful plain.

“ A port there is, enclosed on either side,
Where ships may rest, unanchor'd and untied ;
Till the glad mariners incline to sail,
And the sea whitens with the rising gale. 160
High at its head, from out the cavern'd rock
In living rills a gushing fountain broke :
Around it, and above, for ever green
The bushing alders form'd a shady scene.
Hither some favouring god, beyond our thought, 165
Through all-surrounding shade our navy brought ;
For gloomy night descended on the main,
Nor glimmer'd Phœbe in the ethereal plain :
But all unseen the clouded island lay,
And all unseen the surge and rolling sea, 170
Till safe we anchor'd in the shelter'd bay :

Our sails we gather'd, cast our cables o'er,
And slept secure along the sandy shore.
Soon as again the rosy morning shone,
Reveal'd the landscape and the scene unknown, 175
With wonder seized, we view the pleasing ground,
And walk delighted, and expatiate round.
Roused by the woodland nymphs at early dawn,
The mountain goats came bounding o'er the lawn:
In haste our fellows to the ships repair, 180
For arms and weapons of the sylvan war;
Straight in three squadrons all our crew we part,
And bend the bow, or wing the missile dart:
The bounteous gods afford a copious prey,
And nine fat goats each vessel bears away: 185
The royal bark had ten. Our ships complete
We thus supplied: (for twelve were all the fleet.)
"Here, till the setting sun rolled down the light,
We sat indulging in the genial rite:
Nor wines were wanting; those from ample jars
We drain'd, the prize of our Ciconian wars. 191
The land of Cyclops lay in prospect near;
The voice of goats and bleating flocks we hear,
And from their mountains rising smokes appear.
Now sunk the sun, and darkness cover'd o'er 195
The face of things: along the sea-beat shore
Sate we slept: but when the sacred dawn
Arising glitter'd o'er the dewy lawn,
I call'd my fellows, and these words address'd:
'My dear associates, here indulge your rest; 200
While, with my single ship, adventurous I
Go forth, the manners of yon men to try;
Whether a race unjust, or barbarous might,
Rude, and unconscious of a stranger's right;
Or such who harbour pity in their breast, 205
Revere the gods, and succour the distress'd.'
"This said, I climb'd my vessel's lofty side;
My train obey'd me, and the ship untied.
In order seated on their banks, they sweep
Neptune's smooth face, and cleave the yielding
deep 210

When to the nearest verge of land we drew,
Fast by the sea a lonely cave we view,
High, and with darkening laurels cover'd o'er ;
Where sheep and goats lay slumbering round the
shore.

Near this, a fence of marble from the rock, 215
Brown with o'erarching pine and spreading oak.

A giant shepherd here his flock maintains
Far from the rest, and solitary reigns,
In shelter thick of horrid shade reclined ;
And gloomy mischiefs labour in his mind. 220

A form enormous ! far unlike the race
Of human birth, in stature, or in face ;
As some lone mountain's monstrous growth he
stood,

Crown'd with rough thickets, and a nodding wood.
I left my vessel at the point of land, 225

And close to guard it, gave our crew command :
With only twelve, the boldest and the best,
I seek the adventure, and forsake the rest.
Then took a goatskin fill'd with precious wine,
The gift of Maron of Evanthus' line : 230

(The priest of Phœbus at the Ismarian shrine.)
In sacred shade his honour'd mansion stood
Amid Apollo's consecrated wood ;
Him, and his house, Heaven moved my mind to save,
And costly presents in return he gave ; 235

Seven golden talents to perfection wrought,
A silver bowl that held a copious draught,
And twelve large vessels of unmingled wine,
Mellifluous, undecaying, and divine !

Which now, some ages from his race conceal'd, 240
The hoary sire in gratitude reveal'd.

Such was the wine : to quench whose fervent steam
Scarce twenty measures from the living stream
To cool one cup sufficed : the goblet crown'd
Breath'd aromatic fragrances around. 245

Of this an ample vase we heaved aboard,
And brought another with provision stored.

My soul foreboded I should find the bower
Of some fell monster, fierce with barbarous power,
Some rustic wretch, who lived in Heaven's despite,
Contemning laws, and trampling on the right. 251
The cave we found, but vacant all within :
(His flock the giant tended on the green :)
But round the grot we gaze ; and all we view,
In order ranged, our admiration drew : 255
The bending shelves with loads of cheeses press'd,
The folded flocks each separate from the rest :
(The larger here, and there the lesser lambs,
The new-fall'n young here bleating for their dams ;
The kid distinguish'd from the lambkin lies :) 260
The cavern echoes with responsive cries.
Capacious chargers all around were laid,
Full pails, and vessels of the milking trade.
With fresh provisions hence our fleet to store
My friends advise me, and to quit the shore 265
Or drive a flock of sheep and goats away,
Consult our safety, and put off to sea.
Their wholesome counsel rashly I declined,
Curious to view the man of monstrous kind,
And try what social rites a savage lends : 270
Dire rites, alas ! and fatal to my friends !
“ Then first a fire we kindle, and prepare
For his return with sacrifice and prayer.
The loaden shelves afford us full repast ;
We sit expecting. Lo ! he comes at last. 275
Near half a forest on his back he bore,
And cast the ponderous burden at the door.
It thunder'd as it fell. We trembled then,
And sought the deep recesses of the den.
Now driven before him through the arching rock,
Came tumbling, heaps on heaps, the unnumber'd
flock : 281
Big-udder'd ewes, and goats of female kind :
(The males were penn'd in outward courts behind :)
Then heaved on high, a rock's enormous weight
To the cave's mouth he roll'd, and closed the gate.

(Scarce twenty four-wheel'd cars, compact and
strong, 286

The massy load could bear, or roll along.)

He next betakes him to his evening cares,

And, sitting down, to milk his flocks prepares ;

Of half their udders eases first the dams,

Then to the mothers' teats submits the lambs. 290

Half the white stream to hardening cheese he
press'd,

And high in wicker baskets heap'd : the rest,

Reserved in bowls, supplied his nightly feast.

His labour done, he fired the pile, that gave 295

A sudden blaze, and lighted all the cave.

We stand discover'd by the rising fires ;

Askance the giant glares, and thus inquires :

“ ‘ What are ye, guests ? on what adventure, say,
Thus far ye wander through the watery way ? 300

Pirates perhaps, who seek through seas unknown

The lives of others, and expose your own ? ”

“ His voice like thunder through the cavern
sounds :

My bold companions thrilling fear confounds,

Appall'd at sight of more than mortal man ! 305

At length, with heart recover'd, I began :

“ ‘ From Troy's famed fields, sad wanderers o'er
the main,

Behold the relics of the Grecian train !

Through various seas, by various perils toss'd,

And forced by storms, unwilling, on your coast ; 310

Far from our destined course and native land,

Such was our fate, and such high Jove's command !

Nor what we are befits us to disclaim,

Atrides' friends, (in arms a mighty name,)

Who taught proud Troy and all her sons to bow ; 315

Victors of late, and humble suppliants now !

Low at thy knee thy succour we implore ;

Respect us, human, and relieve us, poor.

At least some hospitable gift bestow ;

'Tis what the happy to the unhappy owe : 320

'Tis that the gods require : those gods revere ;
The poor and stranger are their constant care ;
To Jove their cause, and their revenge belongs."
He wanders with them, and he feels their wrongs.'

" ' Fools that ye are ! ' the savage thus replies, 325
His inward fury blazing at his eyes ;

' Or strangers, distant far from our abodes,
To bid me reverence or regard the gods.

Know then, we Cyclops are a race above 329

Those air-bred people, and their goat-nursed Jove ;
And learn, our power proceeds with thee and thine,
Not as he wills, but as ourselves incline.

But answer, the good ship that brought ye o'er,
Where lies she anchor'd ? near or off the shore ?'

" Thus he. His meditated fraud I find ; 335
(Versed in the turns of various human kind ;)

And, cautious, thus : ' Against a dreadful rock,
Fast by your shore, the gallant vessel broke.

Scarce with these few I 'scaped : of all my train,
Whom angry Neptune whelm'd beneath the main :
The scatter'd wreck the winds blew back again.'

" He answer'd with his deed : his bloody hand
Snatch'd two, unhappy ! of my martial band,
And dash'd like dogs against the stony floor :
The pavement swims with brains and mingled gore.
Torn limb from limb, he spread his horrid feast, 346
And fierce devours it like a mountain beast :

He sucks the marrow, and the blood he drains,
Nor entrails, flesh, nor solid bone remains.
We see the death from which we cannot move, 350
And humbled groan beneath the hand of Jove.

His ample maw with human carnage fill'd,
A milky deluge next the giant swill'd ;

Then stretch'd in length o'er half the cavern'd rock,
Lay senseless and supine, amid the flock. 355

To seize the time, and with a sudden wound
To fix the slumbering monster to the ground,
My soul impels me ; and in act I stand
To draw the sword ; but wisdom held my hand.

A deed so rash had finish'd all our fate, 360
 No mortal forces from the lofty gate
 Could roll the rock. In hopeless grief we lay,
 And sigh, expecting the return of day.
 Now did the rosy-finger'd morn arise,
 And shed her sacred light along the skies. 365
 He wakes, he lights the fire, he milks the dams,
 And to the mothers' teats submits the lambs.
 The task thus finish'd of his morning hours,
 Two more he snatches, murders, and devours.
 Then pleased, and whistling, drives his flock be-
 fore : 370
 Removes the rocky mountain from the door,
 And shuts again : with equal ease disposed,
 As a light quiver's lid is oped and closed.
 His giant voice the echoing region fills ;
 His flocks, obedient, spread o'er all the hills. 375
 " Thus left behind, ev'n in the last despair
 I thought, devised, and Pallas heard my prayer.
 Revenge, and doubt, and caution, work'd my breast ;
 But this of many counsels seem'd the best :
 The monster's club within the cave I spied, 380
 A tree of stateliest growth, and yet undried,
 Green from the wood ; of height and bulk so vast,
 The largest ship might claim it for a mast.
 This shorten'd of its top, I gave my train
 A fathom's length, to shape it and to plane ; 385
 The narrower end I sharpen'd to a spire,
 Whose point we harden'd with the force of fire,
 And hid it in the dust that strew'd the cave.
 Then to my few companions, bold and brave,
 Proposed, who first the venturous deed should try,
 In the broad orbit of his monstrous eye 391
 To plunge the brand, and twirl the pointed wood,
 When slumber next should tame the man of blood.
 Just as I wish'd, the lots were cast on four :
 Myself the fifth. We stand and wait the hour. 395
 He comes with evening : all his fleecy flock
 Before him march, and pour into the rock :

Not one, or male or female, staid behind :
(So fortune chanced, or so some god design'd :)
Then heaving high the stone's unwieldy weight, 400
He roll'd it on the cave, and closed the gate.
First down he sits, to milk the woolly dams,
And then permits their udder to the lambs.
Next seized two wretches more, and headlong cast,
Brain'd on the rock ; it was his third repast. 405
I then approach'd him reeking with their gore,
And held the brimming goblet foaming o'er :
' Cyclop ! since human flesh has been thy feast,
Now drain this goblet, potent to digest ;
Know hence what treasures in our ship we lost, 410
And what rich liquors other climates boast.
We to thy shore the precious freight shall bear,
If home thou send us, and vouchsafe to spare.
But oh ! thus furious, thirsting thus for gore,
The sons of men shall ne'er approach thy shore, 415
And never shalt thou taste this nectar more.'

"He heard, he took, and pouring down his throat,
Delighted, swill'd the large, luxurious draught.
' More ! give me more,' he cried ; ' the boon be thine,
Whoe'er thou art that bear'st celestial wine !
Declare thy name ; not mortal is this juice, 421
Such as the unblest'd Cyclopean climes produce ;
(Though sure our vine the largest cluster yields,
And Jove's scorn'd thunder serves to drench our
fields ;)

But this descended from the bless'd abodes, 425
A rill of nectar, streaming from the gods.'

"He said, and greedy grasp'd the heady bowl,
Thrice drain'd, and pour'd the deluge on his soul.
His sense lay cover'd with the dozy fume ;
While thus my fraudulent speech I reassume : 430
' Thy promised boon, oh Cyclop ! now I claim,
And plead my title ; Noman is my name.
By that distinguish'd from my tender years,
'Tis what my parents call me, and my peers.'

“ The giant then : ‘ Our promised grace receive,
The hospitable boon we mean to give : 436
When all thy wretched crew have felt my power,
Noman shall be the last I will devour.’

“ He said : then nodding with the fumes of wine,
Dropp’d his huge head, and snoring lay supine. 440
His neck obliquely o’er his shoulders hung,
Press’d with the weight of sleep that tames the
strong ;

There belch’d the mingled streams of wine and
blood,

And human flesh, his indigested food.
Sudden I stir the embers, and inspire 445

With animating breath the seeds of fire ;
Each drooping spirit with bold words repair,
And urge my train the dreadful deed to dare.
The stake now glow’d beneath the burning bed
(Green as it was) and sparkled fiery red, 450

Then forth the vengeful instrument I bring ;
With beating hearts my fellows form a ring.
Urged by some present god, they swift let fall
The pointed torment on his visual ball,
Myself above them from a rising ground 455

Guide the sharp stake, and twirl it round and round.
As when a shipwright stands his workmen o’er,
Who ply the wimble some huge beam to bore ;
Urged on all hands, it nimbly spins about,

The grain deep-piercing till it scoops it out : 460
In his broad eye so whirls the fiery wood ;
From the pierced pupil spouts the boiling blood ;
Singed are his brows ; the scorching lids grow
black ;

The jelly bubbles, and the fibres crack.
And as when armourers temper in the ford 465
The keen-edged pole-axe, or the shining sword,
The red-hot metal hisses in the lake,
Thus in his eyeball hiss’d the plunging stake.
He sends a dreadful groan, the rocks around
Through all their inmost winding caves resound. 470

Scared we receded. Forth with frantic hand
 He tore, and dash'd on earth the gory brand :
 Then calls the Cyclops, all that round him dwell,
 With voice like thunder, and a direful yell.
 From all their dens the one-eyed race repair, 475
 From rifted rocks, and mountains black in air.
 All haste assembled, at his well-known roar,
 Inquire the cause, and crowd the cavern door.

“What hurts thee, Polypheme? what strange
 affright 479

Thus breaks our slumbers, and disturbs the night?
 Does any mortal, in the unguarded hour
 Of sleep, oppress thee, or by fraud or power?
 Or thieves insidious thy fair flock surprise?
 Thus they : the Cyclop from his den replies :

“Friends, Noman kills me ; Noman, in the hour
 Of sleep, oppresses me with fraudulent power.’ 486

‘If no man hurt thee, but the hand divine
 Inflict disease, it fits thee to resign :

To Jove or to thy father Neptune pray,
 The brethren cried, and instant strode away. 490

“Joy touched my secret soul and conscious heart,
 Pleased with the effect of conduct and of art.
 Meantime the Cyclop, raging with his wound,
 Spreads his wide arms, and searches round and
 round ;

At last, the stone removing from the gate, 495

With hands extended in the midst he sat ;
 And search'd each passing sheep, and felt it o'er,
 Secure to seize us ere we reach'd the door :

(Such as his shallow wit he deem'd was mine :)
 But secret I revolved the deep design ; 500

’Twas for our lives my labouring bosom wrought ;
 Each scheme I turn'd and sharpen'd every thought :
 This way and that I cast to save my friends,
 Till one resolve my varying counsel ends.

“Strong were the rams, with native purple fair,
 Well fed, and largest of the fleecy care. 506

These three and three, with ozier bands we tied ;
(The twining bands the Cyclop's bed supplied ;)
The midmost bore a man, the outward two
Secured each side : so bound we all the crew. 510
One ram remain'd, the leader of the flock ;
In his deep fleece my grasping hands I lock,
And fast beneath, in woolly curls inwove,
There cling implicit, and confide in Jove.
When rosy morning glimmer'd o'er the dales, 515
He drove to pasture all the lusty males :
The ewes still folded, with distended thighs
Unmilk'd, lay bleating in distressful cries.
But heedless of those cares, with anguish stung,
He felt their fleeces as they pass'd along, 520
Fool that he was, and let them safely go,
All unsuspecting of their freight below.

“ The master ram at last approach'd the gate,
Charged with his wool, and with Ulysses' fate.
Him while he pass'd, the monster blind bespoke :
' What makes my ram the lag of all the flock ? 526
First thou wert wont to crop the flowery mead,
First to the field and river's bank to lead,
And first with stately step at evening hour,
Thy fleecy fellows usher to their bower. 530
Now far the last, with pensive pace and slow
Thou movest, as conscious of thy master's wo !
Seest thou these lids that now unfold in vain ?
(The deed of Noman and his wicked train !)
Oh ! didst thou feel for thy afflicted lord, 535
And would but fate the power of speech afford,
Soon might'st thou tell me, where in secret here
The dastard lurks, all trembling with his fear :
Swung round and round, and dash'd from rock to
rock, 539
His batter'd brains should on the pavement smoke.
No ease, no pleasure my sad heart receives,
While such a monster as vile Noman lives.’
“ The giant spoke, and through the hollow rock
Dismiss'd the ram, the father of the flock.

No sooner freed, and through the enclosure pass'd,
First I release myself, my fellows last : 546
Fat sheep and goats in throngs we drive before,
And reach our vessel on the winding shore.
With joy the sailors view their friends return'd,
And hail us living, whom as dead they mourn'd. 550
Big tears of transport stand in every eye :
I check their fondness, and command to fly.
Aboard in haste they heave the wealthy sheep,
And snatch their oars, and rush into the deep.

“ Now off at sea, and from the shallows clear, 555
As far as human voice could reach the ear,
With taunts the distant giant I accost.
'Hear me, oh Cyclop ! hear, ungracious host !
'Twas on no coward, no ignoble slave,
Thou meditat'st thy meal in yonder cave ; 560
But one, the vengeance fated from above
Doom'd to inflict ; the instrument of Jove.
Thy barbarous breach of hospitable bands,
The god, the god revenges by my hands.'

“ These words the Cyclop's burning rage provoke :
From the tall hill he rends a pointed rock ; 566
High o'er the billows flew the massy load,
And near the ship came thundering on the flood.
It almost brush'd the helm, and fell before :
The whole sea shook, and reflux beat the shore.
The strong concussion on the heaving tide 571
Roll'd back the vessel to the island's side
Again I shoved her off ; our fate to fly,
Each nerve we stretch, and every oar we ply.
Just escaped impending death, when now again 575
We twice as far had furrowed back the main,
Once more I raised my voice ; my friends afraid
With mild entreaties my design dissuade.
What boots the godless giant to provoke,
Whose arm may sink us at a single stroke ? 580
Already when the dreadful rock he threw,
Old ocean shook, and back his surges flew.

The sounding voice directs his aim again;
The rock o'erwhelms us, and we escaped in vain.

“But I, of mind elate, and scorning fear, 585
Thus with new taunts insult the monster's ear:
'Cyclop! if any, pitying thy disgrace,
Ask who disfigured thus that eyeless face,
Say 'twas Ulysses; 'twas his deed, declare,
Laertes' son, of Ithaca the fair; 590
Ulysses, far in fighting fields renown'd,
Before whose arm Troy tumbled to the ground.’

“The astonish'd savage with a roar replies:
'Oh heavens! oh faith of ancient prophecies!
This, Telemus Eurymedes foretold: 595
(The mighty seer who on these hills grew old;
Skill'd the dark fates of mortals to declare,
And learn'd in all wing'd omens of the air:)
Long since he menaced, such was fate's command,
And named Ulysses as the destined hand. 600
I deem'd some godlike giant to behold,
Or lofty hero, haughty, brave, and bold;
Not this weak pigmy wretch, of mean design,
Who not by strength subdued me, but by wine.
But come, accept our gifts, and join to pray 605
Great Neptune's blessing on the watery way;
For his I am, and I the lineage own;
The immortal father no less boasts the son.
His power can heal me, and relight my eye;
And only his, of all the gods on high.’ 610

“‘Oh! could this arm,’ I thus aloud rejoin'd,
'From that vast bulk dislodge thy bloody mind,
And send thee howling to the realms of night!
As sure, as Neptune cannot give thee sight.’

“Thus I; while raging he repeats his cries, 615
With hands uplifted to the starry skies.
'Hear me, oh Neptune! thou whose arms are hurl'd
From shore to shore, and gird the solid world,
If thine I am, nor thou my birth disown,
And if the unhappy Cyclop be thy son; 620

Let not Ulysses breathe his native air,
Laertes' son of Ithaca the fair.
If to review his country be his fate,
Be it through toils and sufferings long and late ;
His lost companions let him first deplore ; 625
Some vessel, not his own, transport him o'er ;
And when at home from foreign sufferings freed,
More near and deep, domestic woes succeed !

“ With imprecations thus he fill'd the air,
And angry Neptune heard the unrighteous prayer.
A larger rock then heaving from the plain, 631
He whirl'd it round ; it swung across the main ;
It fell, and brush'd the stern : the billows roar,
Shake at the weight, and reflux beat the shore.
With all our force we kept aloof to sea, 635
And gain'd the island where our vessels lay.
Our sight the whole collected navy cheer'd,
Who, waiting long, by turns had hoped and fear'd.
There disembarking on the green seaside,
We land our cattle, and the spoil divide : 640
Of these due shares to every sailor fall ;
The master ram was voted mine by all :
And him (the guardian of Ulysses' fate)
With pious mind to Heaven I consecrate.
But the great God, whose thunder rends the skies,
Averse beholds the smoking sacrifice ; 646
And sees me wandering still from coast to coast ;
And all my vessels, all my people, lost !
While thoughtless we indulge the genial rite,
As plenteous cates and flowing bowls invite ; 650
Till evening Phœbus roll'd away the light :
Stretch'd on the shore in careless ease we rest,
'Till ruddy morning purpled o'er the east ;
Then from our anchors all our ships unbind,
And mount the decks, and call the willing wind. 655
Now ranged in order on our banks, we sweep
With hasty strokes the hoarse resounding deep ;
Blind to the future, pensive with our fears,
Glad for the living, for the dead in tears.

B O O K X.

ARGUMENT.

Adventures with Æolus, the Lestrigons, and Circe.

ULYSSES arrives at the island of Æolus, who gives him prosperous winds, and encloses the adverse ones in a bag, which his companions untying, they are driven back again, and rejected—Then they sail to the Lestrigons, where they lose eleven ships, and, with one only remaining, proceed to the island of Circe—Eurylochus is sent first with some companions, all of whom, except Eurylochus, are transformed into swine—Ulysses then undertakes the adventure, and by the help of Mercury, who gives him the herb moly, overcomes the enchantress, and procures the restoration of his men—After a year's stay with her, he prepares, at her instigation, for his voyage to the infernal shades.

“ AT length we reach'd Æolia's sea-girt shore,
Where great Hippotades the sceptre bore—
A floating isle ! High raised by toil divine,
Strong walls of brass the rocky coast confine.
Six blooming youths, in private grandeur bred, 5
And six fair daughters, graced the royal bed :
'These sons their sisters wed, and all remain
'Their parents' pride, and pleasure of their reign.
All day they feast, all day the bowls flow round,
And joy and music through the isle resound : 10
At night each pair on splendid carpets lay,
And crown'd with love the pleasures of the day.
'This happy port affords our wandering fleet
A month's reception and a safe retreat.
Full oft the monarch urged me to relate 15
The fall of Ilion, and the Grecian fate ;

Full oft I told : at length for parting moved :
 The king with mighty gifts my suit approved.
 The adverse winds in leathern bags he braced,
 Compress'd their force, and lock'd each struggling
 blast : 20

For him the mighty sire of gods assign'd
 The tempest's lord, the tyrant of the wind :
 His word alone the listening storms obey,
 To smooth the deep, or swell the foamy sea.
 These in my hollow ship the monarch hung, 25
 Securely fetter'd by a silver thong ;
 But Zephyrus exempt, with friendly gales
 He charged to fill, and guide the swelling sails :
 Rare gift ! but oh, what gift to fools avails !

“ Nine prosperous days we plied the labouring
 oar ; 30

The tenth presents our welcome native shore :
 The hills display the beacon's friendly light,
 And rising mountains gain upon our sight.
 Then first my eyes, by watchful toils oppress'd,
 Complied to take the balmy gifts of rest ; 35
 Then first my hands did from the rudder part ;
 (So much the love of home possess'd my heart ;)
 When lo ! on board a fond debate arose ;
 What rare device those vessels might enclose ?
 What sum, what prize from Æolus I brought ? 40
 While to his neighbour each express'd his thought.

“ ‘ Say, whence, ye gods, contending nations strive
 Who most shall please, who most our hero give ?
 Long have his coffers groan'd with Trojan spoils ;
 While we, the wretched partners of his toils, 45
 Reproach'd by want, our fruitless labours mourn,
 And only rich in barren fame return.

Now Æolus, ye see, augments his store :
 But come, my friends, these mystic gifts explore.'
 They said ; and (oh cursed fate !) the thongs unbound.
 The gushing tempest sweeps the ocean round ; 51
 Snatch'd in the whirl, the hurried navy flew,
 The ocean widen'd, and the shores withdrew.

Roused from my fatal sleep, I long debate
If still to live, or desperate plunge to fate ; 55
Thus doubting, prostrate on the deck I lay,
Till all the coward thoughts of death gave way.

“ Meanwhile our vessels plough the liquid plain,
And soon the known Æolian coast regain,
Our groans the rocks remurmur'd to the main. 60
We leap'd on shore, and with a scanty feast
Our thirst and hunger hastily repress'd ;
That done, two chosen heralds straight attend
Our second progress to my royal friend : 65
And him amid his jovial sons we found ;
The banquet steaming, and the goblets crown'd :
There humbly stopp'd with conscious shame and
awe,

Nor nearer than the gate presumed to draw.
But soon his sons their well-known guests descried,
And starting from their couches loudly cried, 70
‘ Ulysses here ! what demon couldst thou meet
To thwart thy passage, and repel thy fleet ?
Wast thou not furnish'd by our choicest care
For Greece, for home, and all thy soul held dear ?’
Thus they ; in silence long my fate I mourn'd, 75
At length these words with accent low return'd :
‘ Me, lock'd in sleep, my faithless crew bereft
Of all the blessings of your godlike gift !
But grant, oh grant our loss we may retrieve :
A favour you, and you alone can give.’ 80

“ Thus I with art to move their pity tried,
And touch'd the youths ; but their stern sire replied :
‘ Vile wretch, begone ! this instant I command
Thy fleet accursed to leave our hallow'd land.
His baneful suit pollutes these bless'd abodes, 85
Whose fate proclaims him hateful to the gods.’

“ Thus fierce he said : we sighing went our way,
And with desponding hearts put off to sea.
The sailors, spent with toils, their folly mourn,
But mourn in vain ; no prospect of return : 90

Six days and nights a doubtful course we steer,
'The next proud Lamos' stately towers appear,"
And Lestrigonia's gates arise distinct in air.
The shepherd, quitting here at night the plain,
Calls, to succeed his cares, the watchful swain ; 95
But he that scorns the chains of sleep to wear,
And adds the herdsman's to the shepherd's care,
So near the pastures, and so short the way,
His double toils may claim a double pay,
And join the labours of the night and day. 100

" Within a long recess a bay there lies,
Edged round with cliffs high pointing to the skies ;
The jutting shores that swell on either side
Contract its mouth, and break the rushing tide.
Our eager sailors seize the fair retreat, 105
And bound within the port their crowded fleet ;
For here retired the sinking billows sleep,
And smiling calmness silver'd o'er the deep.
I only in the bay refused to moor,
And fix'd, without, my halsers to the shore. 110

" From thence we climb'd a point, whose airy
brow

Commands the prospect of the plains below :
No tracks of beasts, or signs of men, we found,
But smoky volumes rolling from the ground.
Two with our herald thither we command, 115
With speed to learn what men possess'd the land.
They went, and kept the wheel's smooth-beaten
road

Which to the city drew the mountain wood ;
When lo ! they met, beside a crystal spring,
The daughter of Antiphates the king ; 120
She to Artacia's silver streams came down :
(Artacia's streams alone supply the town :)
'The damsel they approach, and ask'd what race
The people were, who monarch of the place.
With joy the maid the unwary strangers heard, 125
And show'd them where the royal dome appear'd.

They went ; but, as they entering saw the queen
 Of size enormous, and terrific mien,
 (Not yielding to some bulky mountain's height,)
 A sudden horror struck their aching sight. 130
 Swift at her call her husband scour'd away
 To wreak his hunger on the destined prey ;
 One for his food the raging glutton slew,
 But two rush'd out, and to the navy flew.

“Balk'd of his prey, the yelling monster flies, 135
 And fills the city with his hideous cries :
 A ghastly band of giants hear the roar,
 And, pouring down the mountains, crowd the shore.
 Fragments they rend from off the craggy brow,
 And dash the ruins on the ships below : 140
 The crackling vessels burst ; hoarse groans arise,
 And mingled horrors echo to the skies ;
 The men, like fish, they stuck upon the flood,
 And cramm'd their filthy throats with human food.
 While thus their fury rages at the bay, 145
 My sword our cables cut, I call'd to weigh,
 And charged my men, as they from fate would fly,
 Each nerve to strain, each bending oar to ply.
 The sailors catch the word, their oars they seize,
 And sweep with equal strokes the smoky seas : 150
 Clear of the rocks the impatient vessel flies ;
 While in the port each wretch encumber'd dies.
 With earnest haste my frightened sailors press,
 While kindling transports glow'd at our success ;
 But the sad fate that did our friends destroy 155
 Cool'd every breast, and damp'd the rising joy.

“Now dropp'd our anchors in the Ææan bay,
 Where Circe dwelt, the daughter of the Day !
 Her mother Perse, of old Ocean's strain,
 Thus from the Sun descended, and the Main ; 160
 (From the same lineage stern Æætes came,
 The far-famed brother of the enchantress dame ;)
 Goddess, and queen, to whom the powers belong
 Of dreadful magic, and commanding song.

Some god directing to this peaceful bay 165
Silent we came, and melancholy lay,
Spent and o'erwatch'd. Two days and nights roll'd
on,

And now the third succeeding morning shone.
I climb'd a cliff, with spear and sword in hand,
Whose ridge o'erlook'd a shady length of land. 170
To learn if aught of mortal works appear,
Or cheerful voice of mortal strike the ear?
From the high point I mark'd, in distant view,
A stream of curling smoke ascending blue,
And spiry tops, the tufted trees above, 175
Of Circe's palace bosom'd in the grove.

"Thither to haste, the region to explore,
Was first my thought: but speeding back to shore
I deem'd it best to visit first my crew,
And send out spies the dubious coast to view. 180
As down the hill I solitary go,
Some power divine, who pities human wo,
Sent a tall stag, descending from the wood,
To cool his fervour in the crystal flood;
Luxuriant on the waveworn bank he lay, 185
Stretch'd forth and panting in the sunny ray.
I launch'd my spear, and with a sudden wound
Transpierced his back, and fix'd him to the ground.
He falls, and mourns his fate with human cries;
Through the wide wound the vital spirit flies. 190
I drew, and casting on the river's side
The bloody spear, his gather'd feet I tied
With twining osiers which the bank supplied.
An ell in length the pliant wisp I weaved,
And the huge body on my shoulders heaved: 195
Then leaning on the spear with both my hands,
Upbore my load, and press'd the sinking sands
With weighty steps, till at the ship I threw
The welcome burden, and bespoke my crew.

"Cheer up, my friends, it is not yet our fate 200
To glide with ghosts through Pluto's gloomy gate.

Food in the desert land, behold ! is given ;
Live, and enjoy the providence of Heaven.'

“ The joyful crew survey his mighty size,
And on the future banquet feast their eyes, 205
As huge in length extended lay the beast ;
Then wash their hands, and hasten to the feast.
There, till the setting sun roll'd down the light,
They sat indulging in the genial rite.

When evening rose, and darkness cover'd o'er 210
The face of things, we slept along the shore.
But when the rosy morning warm'd the east,
My men I summon'd, and these words address'd :

“ ‘ Followers and friends ! attend what I propose :
Ye sad companions of Ulysses' woes ! 215
We know not here what land before us lies,
Or to what quarter now we turn our eyes,
Or where the sun shall set, or where shall rise.
Here let us think (if thinking be not vain)
If any counsel, any hope remain. 220

Alas ! from yonder promontory's brow
I view'd the coast, a region flat and low ;
An isle encircled with the boundless flood ;
A length of thickets, and entangled wood.
Some smoke I saw amid the forest rise, 225
And all around it only seas and skies !'

“ With broken hearts my sad companions stood,
Mindful of Cyclop and his human food,
And horrid Lestrigons, the men of blood.
Presaging tears apace began to rain ; 230
But tears in mortal miseries are vain.

In equal parts I straight divide my band,
And name a chief each party to command ;
I led the one, and of the other side
Appointed brave Eurylochus the guide. 235

Then in the brazen helm the lots we throw,
And fortune casts Eurylochus to go :
He march'd with twice eleven in his train ;
Pensive they march, and pensive we remain.

“ The palace in a woody vale they found, 240
High raised of stone ; a shaded space around ;
Where mountain wolves and brindled lions roam,
(By magic tamed,) familiar to the dome.
With gentle blandishment our men they meet,
And wag their tails, and fawning lick their feet. 245
As from some feast a man returning late,
His faithful dogs all meet him at the gate,
Rejoicing round, some morsel to receive :
(Such as the good man ever used to give.)
Domestic thus the grisly beasts drew near ; 250
They gazed with wonder not unmix'd with fear.
Now on the threshold of the dome they stood,
And heard a voice resounding through the wood :
Placed at the loom within, her goddess sung ;
The vaulted roofs and solid pavement rung. 255
O'er the fair web the rising figures shine,
Immortal labour ! worthy hands divine.
Polites to the rest the question moved :
(A gallant leader, and a man I loved :)
“ ‘ What voice celestial, chanting to the loom, 260
(Or nymph, or goddess,) echoes from the room ?
Say, shall we seek access ?’ With that they call ;
And wide unfold the portals of the hall.
“ The goddess rising, asks her guests to stay,
Who blindly follow where she leads the way. 265
Eurylochus alone of all the band,
Suspecting fraud, more prudently remain'd.
On thrones around with downy covering graced,
With semblance fair, the unhappy men she placed.
Milk newly press'd, the sacred flour of wheat, 270
And honey fresh, and Pramnian wines the treat :
But venom'd was the bread, and mix'd the bowl,
With drugs of force to darken all the soul :
Soon in the luscious feast themselves they lost,
And drank oblivion of their native coast. 275
Instant her circling wand the goddess waves,
To hogs transforms them, and the sty receives.

No more was seen the human form divine ;
Head, face, and members, bristle into swine : 279
Still cursed with sense, their minds remain alone,
And their own voice affrights them when they groan.
Meanwhile the goddess in disdain bestows
The mast and acorn, brutal food ! and strows
The fruits of cornel, as their feast, around ; 284
Now prone and grovelling on unsavoury ground.

“ Eurylochus, with pensive steps and slow,
Aghast returns, the messenger of wo,
And bitter fate. To speak he made essay,
In vain essay’d, nor would his tongue obey.
His swelling heart denied the words their way : 290
But speaking tears the want of words supply,
And the full soul bursts copious from his eye.
Affrighted, anxious for our fellows’ fates,
We press to hear what sadly he relates.

“ ‘ We went, Ulysses, (such was thy command,)
Through the lone thicket and the desert land. 296
A palace in a woody vale we found
Brown with dark forests, and with shades around.
A voice celestial echo’d from the dome,
Or nymph or goddess, chanting to the loom. 300
Access we sought, nor was access denied :
Radiant she came : the portals open’d wide :
The goddess mild invites the guests to stay :
They blindly follow where she leads the way.
I only wait behind of all the train : 305
I waited long, and eyed the doors in vain :
The rest are vanish’d, none repass’d the gate ;
And not a man appears to tell their fate.’ ”

“ I heard, and instant o’er my shoulders flung
The belt in which my weighty falchion hung : 310
(A beamy blade :) then seized the bended bow,
And bade him guide the way, resolved to go.
He, prostrate falling, with both hands embraced
My knees, and, weeping, thus his suit address’d :

“ ‘ Oh king, beloved of Jove, thy servant spare,
And ah ! thyself the rash attempt forbear ! 316

Never, alas ! thou never shalt return,
Or see the wretched for whose loss we mourn.
With what remains from certain ruin fly,
And save the few not fated yet to die.' 320

" I answer'd stern : ' Inglorious then remain,
Here feast and loiter, and desert thy train.
Alone, unfriended will I tempt my way ;
The laws of fate compel, and I obey.'

" This said, and scornful turning from the shore
My haughty step, I stalk'd the valley o'er. 326
Till now approaching nigh the magic bower,
Where dwelt the enchantress skill'd in herbs of
power,

A form divine forth issued from the wood
(Immortal Hermes with the golden rod) 330

In human semblage. On his bloomy face
Youth smiled celestial, with each opening grace.
He seized my hand, and gracious thus began :
' Ah, whither roam'st thou, much enduring man ?
Oh, blind to fate ! what led thy steps to rove 335
The horrid mazes of this magic grove ?

Each friend you seek in yon enclosure lies,
All lost their form, and habitants of styces.
Think'st thou by wit to model their escape ?
Sooner shalt thou, a stranger to thy shape, 340
Fall prone their equal : first thy danger know,
Then take the antidote the gods bestow.

The plant I give through all the direful bower
Shall guard thee, and avert the evil hour.
Now hear her wicked arts. Before thy eyes 345

The bowl shall sparkle and the banquet rise ;
Take this, nor from the faithless feast abstain,
For temper'd drugs and poison shall be vain.
Soon as she strikes her wand, and gives the word,
Draw forth and brandish thy refulgent sword, 350
And menace death : those menaces shall move
Her alter'd mind to blandishment and love.
Nor shun the blessing proffer'd to thy arms,
Ascend her bed, and taste celestial charms :

So shall thy tedious toils a respite find, 355
 And thy lost friends return to human kind.
 But swear her first by those dread oaths that tie
 The powers below, the blessed in the sky;
 Lest to thee naked secret fraud be meant,
 Or magic bind thee cold and impotent.' 360

“Thus while he spoke, the sovereign plant he
 drew

Where on the all-bearing earth unmark'd it grew,
 And show'd its nature and its wondrous power :
 Black was the root, but milky white the flower ;
 Moly the name, to mortals hard to find, 365
 But all is easy to the ethereal kind.

This Hermes gave, then, gliding off the glade,
 Shot to Olympus from the woodland shade.
 While, full of thought, revolving fates to come,
 I speed my passage to the enchanted dome. 370

Arrived, before the lofty gates I staid ;
 The lofty gates the goddess wide display'd :
 She leads before, and to the feast invites ;
 I follow sadly to the magic rites.

Radiant with starry studs, a silver seat 375
 Received my limbs : a footstool eased my feet.
 She mix'd the potion, fraudulent of soul ;
 The poison mantled in the golden bowl.

I took, and quaff'd it, confident in Heaven :
 Then waved the wand, and then the word was given :
 ‘Hence to thy fellows !’ dreadful she began ; 381
 ‘Go, be a beast !’ I heard, and yet was man.

“Then sudden whirling like a waving flame,
 My beamy falchion, I assault the dame.
 Struck with unusual fear, she trembling cries. 385
 She faints, she falls ; she lifts her weeping eyes.

“‘What art thou ? say ! from whence, from whom
 you came ?

Oh more than human ! tell thy race, thy name.
 Amazing strength, these poisons to sustain !
 Not mortal thou, nor mortal is thy brain. 390

Or art thou he, the man to come, (foretold
 By Hermes powerful with the wand of gold,)
 The man from Troy, who wander'd ocean round;
 The man for wisdom's various arts renown'd,
 Ulysses! Oh, thy threatening fury cease, 395
 Sheath thy bright sword, and join our hands in
 peace!

Let mutual joys our mutual trust combine,
 And love, and loveborn confidence, be thine.'

" 'And how, dread Circe!' furious I rejoin;
 'Can love, and loveborn confidence, be mine, 400
 Beneath thy charms when my companions groan,
 Transform'd to beasts, with accents not their own?
 Oh thou of fraudulent heart! shall I be led
 To share thy feast-rites, or ascend thy bed;
 That, all unarm'd, thy vengeance may have vent,
 And magic bind me, cold and impotent? 406

Celestial as thou art, yet stand denied;
 Or swear that oath by which the gods are tied,
 Swear, in thy soul no latent frauds remain,
 Swear by the vow which never can be vain.' 410

"The goddess swore: then seized my hand, and
 led

To the sweet transports of the genial bed.
 Ministrant to the queen, with busy care
 Four faithful handmaids the soft rites prepare,
 Nymphs sprung from fountains, or from shady
 woods, 415

Or the fair offspring of the sacred floods.
 One o'er the couches painted carpets threw,
 Whose purple lustre glow'd against the view:
 White linen lay beneath. Another placed
 The silver stands, with golden flaskets graced: 420
 With dulcet beverage this the beaker crown'd,
 Fair in the midst, with gilded cups around;
 That in the tripod o'er the kindled pile
 The water pours; the bubbling waters boil;
 An ample vase receives the smoking wave; 425
 And in the bath prepared, my limbs I lave:

Reviving sweets repair the mind's decay,
 And take the painful sense of toil away.
 A vest and tunic o'er me next she threw,
 Fresh from the bath, and dropping balmy dew ; 430
 Then led and placed me on the sovereign seat,
 With carpets spread ; a footstool at my feet.
 The golden ewer a nymph obsequious brings,
 Replenish'd from the cool translucent springs ;
 With copious water the bright vase supplies 435
 A silver laver of capacious size.

I wash'd. The table in fair order spread,
 They heap the glittering canisters with bread ;
 Viands of various kinds allure the taste,
 Of choicest sort and savour, rich repast ! 440
 Circe in vain invites the feast to share ;
 Absent I ponder, and absorb'd in care :

While scenes of wo rose anxious in my breast,
 The queen beheld me, and these words address'd :
 “ ‘ Why sits Ulysses silent and apart, 445
 Some hoard of grief close harbour'd at his heart ?
 Untouch'd before thee stand the cates divine,
 And unregarded laughs the rosy wine.

Can yet a doubt or any dread remain, 449
 When sworn that oath which never can be vain ?’

“ I answer'd : ‘ Goddess ! human is my breast,
 By justice sway'd, by tender pity press'd :
 Ill fits it me, whose friends are sunk to beasts,
 To quaff thy bowls, or riot in thy feasts.
 Me wouldst thou please ? for them thy cares em-
 ploy, 455

And them to me restore, and me to joy.’

“ With that she parted : in her potent hand
 She bore the virtue of the magic wand.
 Then, hastening to the styes, set wide the door,
 Urged forth, and drove the bristly herd before ; 460
 Unwieldy, out they rush'd with general cry,
 Enormous beasts dishonest to the eye.
 Now touch'd by counter charms they change again,
 And stand majestic, and recall'd to men.

Those hairs of late that bristled every part, 465
Fall off, miraculous effect of art!

Till all the form in full proportion rise,
More young, more large, more graceful to my eyes.
'They saw, they knew me, and with eager pace
Clung to their master in a long embrace: 470

Sad, pleasing sight! with tears each eye ran o'er,
And sobs of joy re-echo'd through the bower;
Ev'n Circe wept, her adamant heart
Felt pity enter, and sustain'd her part.

"'Son of Laertes!' then the queen began; 475
'Oh much-enduring, much-experienced man!

Haste to thy vessel on the seabeat shore,
Unload thy treasures, and the galley moor;
Then bring thy friends, secure from future harms,
And in our grottoes stow thy spoils and arms.' 480

"She said. Obedient to her high command,
I quit the place, and hasten to the strand.
My sad companions on the beach I found,
Their wistful eyes in floods of sorrow drown'd.
As from fresh pastures and the dewy field 485

(When loaded cribs their evening banquet yield)
The lowing herds return; around them throng
With leaps and bounds their late imprison'd young,
Rush to their mothers with unruly joy,
And echoing hills return the tender cry: 490

So round me press'd, exulting at my sight,
With cries and agonies of wild delight,
The weeping sailors; nor less fierce their joy
Than if return'd to Ithaca from Troy.

'Ah, master! ever honour'd, ever dear!' 495
These tender words on every side I hear;
'What other joy can equal thy return?

Not that loved country for whose sight we mourn,
The soil that nursed us, and that gave us breath:
But, ah! relate our lost companions' death.' 500

"I answer'd cheerful: 'Haste, your galley moor,
And bring our treasures and our arms ashore;

Those in yon hollow caverns let us lay;
Then rise, and follow where I lead the way.
Your fellows live : believe your eyes, and come 505
To taste the joys of Circe's sacred dome.'

"With ready speed the joyful crew obey;
Alone Eurylochus persuades their stay.
'Whither,' he cried, 'ah, whither will ye run?
Seek ye to meet those evils ye should shun? 510
Will you the terrors of the dome explore,
In swine to grovel, or in lions roar,
Or wolflike howl away the midnight hour
In dreadful watch around the magic bower?
Remember Cyclop and his bloody deed; 515
The leader's rashness made the soldiers bleed.'

"I heard incensed, and first resolved to speed
My flying falchion at the rebel's head.
Dear as he was, by ties of kindred bound,
This hand had stretch'd him breathless on the
ground, 520

But all at once my interposing train
For mercy pleaded, nor could plead in vain.
'Leave here the man who dares his prince desert,
Leave to repentance and his own sad heart,
To guard the ship. Seek we the sacred shades 525
Of Circe's palace, where Ulysses leads.'

"This with one voice declared, the rising train
Left the black vessel by the murmuring main.
Shame touch'd Eurylochus's alter'd breast;
He feared my threats, and follow'd with the rest. 530

"Meanwhile the goddess, with indulgent cares
And social joys, the late transform'd repairs;
The bath, the feast, their fainting soul renews;
Rich in refulgent robes, and dropping balmy dews:
Brightening with joy their eager eyes behold 535
Each other's face, and each his story told;
Then gushing tears the narrative confound,
And with their sobs the vaulted roofs resound.
When hush'd their passion, thus the goddess cries:

'Ulysses, taught by labours to be wise, 540
 Let this short memory of grief suffice.
 To me are known the various woes ye bore,
 In storms by sea, in perils on the shore ;
 Forget whatever was in Fortune's power,
 And share the pleasures of this genial hour. 545
 Such be your minds as ere ye left your coast,
 Or learn'd to sorrow for a country lost.
 Exiles and wanderers now, where'er ye go
 Too faithful memory renews your wo :
 The cause removed, habitual griefs remain, 550
 And the soul saddens by the use of pain.'

"Her kind entreaty moved the general breast ;
 Tired with long toil, we willing sunk to rest.
 We plied the banquet, and the bowl we crown'd,
 Till the full circle of the year came round. 555
 But when the seasons, following in their train,
 Brought back the months, the days, and hours
 again ;

As from a lethargy at once they rise,
 And urge their chief with animating cries :
 " 'Is this, Ulysses, our inglorious lot ? 560
 And is the name of Ithaca forgot ?
 Shall never the dear land in prospect rise,
 Or the loved palace glitter in our eyes ?'

"Melting I heard ; yet till the sun's decline
 Prolong'd the feast and quaff'd the rosy wine : 565
 But when the shades came on at evening hour,
 And all lay slumbering in the dusky bower,
 I came a suppliant to fair Circe's bed,
 The tender moment seiz'd, and thus I said :
 'Be mindful, goddess, of thy promise made ; 570
 Must sad Ulysses ever be delay'd ?
 Around their lord my sad companions mourn,
 Each breast beats homeward, anxious to return :
 If but a moment parted from thy eyes, 574
 Their tears flow round me, and my heart complies.'

" 'Go then,' she cried, 'ah go ! yet think, not I,
 Not Circe, but the fates, your wish deny.

Ah hope not yet to breathe thy native air !
Far other journey first demands thy care ;
To tread the uncomfortable paths beneath, 580
And view the realms of darkness and of death.
There seek the Theban bard, deprived of sight ;
Within, irradiate with prophetic light ;
To whom Persephone, entire and whole,
Gave to retain the unseparated soul ; 585
The rest are forms, of empty ether made ;
Impassive semblance, and a flitting shade.'

" Struck at the word, my very heart was dead ;
Pensive I sat ; my tears bedew'd the bed ;
To hate the light and life my soul begun, 590
And saw that all was grief beneath the sun.
Composed at length, the gushing tears suppress'd,
And my toss'd limbs now wearied into rest,
' How shall I tread,' I cried, ' ah Circe ! say,
The dark descent, and who shall guide the way ? 595
Can living eyes behold the realms below ?
What bark to waft me, and what wind to blow ?'

" ' Thy fated road,' the magic power replied,
' Divine Ulysses ! asks no mortal guide.
Rear but the mast, the spacious sail display, 600
The northern winds shall wing thee on thy way.
Soon shalt thou reach old ocean's utmost ends,
Where to the main the shelving shore descends ;
The barren trees of Proserpine's black woods,
Poplars and willows trembling o'er the floods : 605
There fix thy vessel in the lonely bay,
And enter there the kingdoms void of day :
Where Phlegethon's loud torrents, rushing down,
Hiss in the flaming gulf of Acheron ;
And where, slow rolling from the Stygian bed, 610
Cocytus' lamentable waters spread :
Where the dark rock o'erhangs the infernal lake,
And mingling streams eternal murmurs make.
First draw thy falchion, and on every side
Trench the black earth a cubit long and wide : 615

To all the shades around libations pour,
And o'er the ingredients strew the hallow'd flour :
New wine and milk, with honey temper'd, bring ;
And living water from the crystal spring.
Then the wan shades and feeble ghosts implore, 620
With promised offerings on thy native shore ;
A barren cow, the stateliest of the isle,
And, heap'd with various wealth, a blazing pile :
These to the rest ; but to the seer must bleed
A sable ram, the pride of all thy breed. 625
These solemn vows and holy offerings paid
To all the phantom nations of the dead ;
Be next thy care the sable sheep to place
Full o'er the pit, and hellward turn their face :
But from the infernal rite thine eye withdraw, 630
And back to ocean glance with reverend awe.
Sudden shall skim along the dusky glades
Thin airy shoals, and visionary shades.
Then give command the sacrifice to haste,
Let the flay'd victims in the flame be cast, 635
And sacred vows and mystic song applied
To grisly Pluto and his gloomy bride.
Wide o'er the pool thy falchion waved around
Shall drive the spectres from forbidden ground :
The sacred draught shall all the dead forbear, 640
Till awful from the shades arise the seer.
Let him, oraculous, the end, the way,
The turns of all thy future fate display,
Thy pilgrimage to come, and remnant of thy day.'
" So speaking, from the ruddy orient shone 645
The morn, conspicuous on her golden throne.
The goddess with a radiant tunic dress'd
My limbs, and o'er me cast a silken vest.
Long flowing robes, of purest white, array
The nymph, that added lustre to the day : 650
A tiar wreath'd her head with many a fold ;
Her waist was circled with a zone of gold.
Forth issuing then, from place to place I flew ;
Rouse man by man, and animate my crew.

‘ Rise, rise, my mates ! ’tis Circe gives command :
 Our journey calls us ; haste, and quit the land.’ 656
 All rise and follow, yet depart not all,
 For fate decreed one wretched man to fall.

“ A youth there was, Elpenor was he named,
 Not much for sense, nor much for courage famed :
 ‘ The youngest of our band, a vulgar soul, 661
 Born but to banquet, and to drain the bowl.
 He, hot and careless, on a turret’s height
 With sleep repair’d the long debauch of night :
 The sudden tumult stirr’d him where he lay, 665
 And down he hasten’d, but forgot the way ;
 Full endlong from the roof the sleeper fell,
 And snapp’d the spinal joint, and waked in hell.

“ The rest crowd round me with an eager look ;
 I met them with a sigh, and thus bespoke : 670
 ‘ Already, friends ! ye think your toils are o’er,
 Your hopes already touch your native shore :
 Alas ! far otherwise the nymph declares,
 Far other journey first demands our cares ;
 To tread the uncomfortable paths beneath, 675
 The dreary realms of darkness and of death ;
 To seek Tiresias’ awful shade below,
 And thence our fortunes and our fates to know.’

“ My sad companions heard in deep despair ;
 Frantic they tore their manly growth of hair ; 680
 To earth they fell : the tears began to rain ;
 But tears in mortal miseries are vain.
 Sadly they fared along the seabeat shore ;
 Still heaved their hearts, and still their eyes ran
 o’er.

The ready victims at our bark we found, 685
 The sable ewe and ram togther bound.
 For swift as thought the goddess had been there,
 And thence had glided, viewless as the air :
 The paths of gods what mortal can survey ? 689
 Who eyes their motion ! who shall trace their way ?

BOOK XI.

ARGUMENT.

The Descent into Hell.

ULYSSES continues his narration—How he arrived at the land of the Cimmerians, and what ceremonies he performed to invoke the dead—The manner of his descent, and the apparition of the shades : his conversation with Elpenor, and with Tiresias, who informs him in a prophetic manner of his fortunes to come—He meets his mother Anticlea, from whom he learns the state of his family—He sees the shades of the ancient heroines, afterward of the heroes, and converses in particular with Agamemnon and Achilles—Ajax keeps at a sullen distance, and disdains to answer him—He then beholds Tityus, Tantalus, Sisyphus, Hercules ; till he is deterred from further curiosity by the apparition of horrid spectres, and the cries of the wicked in torments.

“ Now to the shores we bend, a mournful train,
Climb the tall bark, and launch into the main :
At once the mast we rear, at once unbind
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind :
Then pale and pensive stand, with cares oppress’d,
And solemn horror saddens every breast. 6
A freshening breeze the magic power supplied,
While the wing’d vessel flew along the tide ;
Our oars we shipp’d : all day the swelling sails
Full from the guiding pilot catch’d the gales. 10
“ Now sunk the sun from his aerial height,
And o’er the shaded billows rush’d the night :
When, lo ! we reach’d old ocean’s utmost bounds,
Where rocks control his waves with ever-during
mounds.

“There in a lonely land, and gloomy cells, 15
The dusky nation of Cimmeria dwells;
The sun ne’er views the uncomfortable seats,
When radiant he advances or retreats :
Unhappy race ! whom endless night invades, 19
Clouds the dull air, and wraps them round in shades.

“The ship we moor on these obscure abodes ;
Disbark the sheep, an offering to the gods ;
And hellward bending, o’er the beach descrie
The doleful passage to the infernal sky.
The victims, vow’d to each Tartarian power, 25
Eurylochus and Perimedes bore.

“Here open’d hell, all hell I here implored,
And from the scabbard drew the shining sword :
And trenching the black earth on every side,
A cavern form’d, a cubit long and wide. 30
New wine, with honey-temper’d milk, we bring,
Then living waters from the crystal spring :
O’er these was strew’d the consecrated flour,
And on the surface shone the holy store.

“Now the wan shades we hail, the infernal gods,
To speed our course, and waft us o’er the floods : 36
So shall a barren heifer from the stall
Beneath the knife upon your altars fall ;
So in our palace, at our safe return,
Rich with unnumber’d gifts the pile shall burn ; 40
So shall a ram, the largest of the breed,
Black as these regions, to Tiresias bleed.

“Thus solemn rites and holy vows we paid
To all the phantom nations of the dead,
Then died the sheep : a purple torrent flow’d ; 45
And all the caverns smoked with streaming blood.
When lo ! appear’d along the dusky coasts,
Thin airy shoals of visionary ghosts ;
Fair, pensive youths, and soft enamour’d maids ;
And wither’d elders, pale and wrinkled shades ; 50
Ghastly with wounds the forms of warriors slain
Stalk’d with majestic port, a martial train :

These and a thousand more swarm'd o'er the ground,
And all the dire assembly shriek'd around.

Astonish'd at the sight, aghast I stood, 55
And a cold fear ran shivering through my blood ;
Straight I command the sacrifice to haste,
Straight the flay'd victims to the flames are cast,
And mutter'd vows, and mystic song applied
To grisly Pluto, and his gloomy bride. 60

“ Now swift I waved my falchion o'er the blood ;
Back started the pale throngs, and trembling stood.
Round the black trench the gore untasted flows,
Till awful from the shades Tiresias rose.

“ There wandering through the gloom I first sur-
vey'd, 65

New to the realms of death, Elpenor's shade :
His cold remains all naked to the sky
On distant shores unwept, unburied lie.

Sad at the sight I stand, deep fix'd in wo,
And ere I spoke the tears began to flow. 70

“ ‘ Oh say what angry power Elpenor led
To glide in shades, and wander with the dead ?
How could thy soul, by realms and seas disjoin'd,
Outfly the nimble sail, and leave the lagging wind ?’

“ The ghost replied : ‘ To hell my doom I owe, 75
Demons accursed, dire ministers of wo !

My feet, through wine unfaithful to their weight,
Betray'd me tumbling from a towery height ;
Staggering I reel'd, and as I reel'd I fell,
Lux'd the neck joint—my soul descends to hell. 80

But lend me aid, I now conjure thee lend,
By the soft tie and sacred name of friend !
By thy fond consort ! by thy father's cares !
By loved Telemachus's blooming years !

For well I know that soon the heavenly powers 85
Will give thee back to day, and Circe's shores :
There pious on my cold remains attend,
There call to mind thy poor departed friend.

The tribute of a tear is all I crave,
And the possession of a peaceful grave. 90

But if, unheard, in vain compassion plead,
 Revere the gods, the gods avenge the dead !
 A tomb along the watery margin raise,
 The tomb with manly arms and trophies grace,
 To show posterity Elpenor was. 95
 There high in air, memorial of my name,
 Fix the smooth oar, and bid me live to fame.'

" To whom with tears : ' These rites, oh mourn-
 ful shade,
 Due to thy ghost, shall to thy ghost be paid.' 99

" Still as I spoke the phantom seem'd to moan,
 Tear followed tear, and groan succeeded groan.
 But as my waving sword the blood surrounds,
 The shade withdrew, and mutter'd empty sounds.

" There as the wondrous visions I survey'd,
 All pale ascends my royal mother's shade : 105
 A queen, to Troy she saw our legions pass ;
 Now a thin form is all Anticlea was !
 Struck at the sight I melt with filial wo,
 And down my cheek the pious sorrows flow,
 Yet as I shook my falchion o'er the blood, 110
 Regardless of her son the parent stood.

" When lo ! the mighty Theban I behold ;
 To guide his steps he bore a staff of gold ;
 Awful he trod ; majestic was his look !
 And from his holy lips these accents broke : 115

" ' Why, mortal, wanderest thou from cheerful day,
 To tread the downward, melancholy way ?
 What angry gods to these dark regions led
 Thee, yet alive, companion of the dead ? 119
 But sheath thy poniard, while my tongue relates
 Heaven's steadfast purpose, and thy future fates.'

" While yet he spoke, the prophet I obey'd,
 And in the scabbard plunged the glittering blade :
 Eager he quaff'd the gore, and then express'd
 Dark things to come, the counsels of his breast :

" ' Weary of light, Ulysses here explores 126
 A prosperous voyage to his native shores ;

But know—by me unerring fates disclose
New trains of dangers, and new scenes of woes.
I see, I see, thy bark by Neptune toss'd, 130
For injured Cyclop, and his eyeball lost!
Yet to thy woes the gods decree an end,
If Heaven thou please! and how to please attend!
Where on Trinacrian rocks the ocean roars, 134
Graze numerous herds along the verdant shores;
Though hunger press, yet fly the dangerous prey,
The herds are sacred to the god of day,
Who all surveys with his extensive eye,
Above, below, on earth, and in the sky!
Rob not the god; and so propitious gales 140
Attend thy voyage, and impel thy sails:
But, if his herds ye seize, beneath the waves
I see thy friends o'erwhelmed in liquid graves!
The direful wreck Ulysses scarce survives!
Ulysses at his country scarce arrives! 145
Strangers thy guides! nor there thy labours end,
New foes arise, domestic ills attend!
There foul adulterers to thy bride resort,
And lordly gluttons riot in thy court.
But vengeance hastes amain! These eyes behold
The deathful scene, princes on princes roll'd! 151
That done, a people far from sea explore,
Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,
Or saw gay vessels stem the watery plain,
A painted wonder flying on the main! 155
Bear on thy back an oar: with strange amaze
A shepherd meeting thee, the oar surveys,
And names a van: there fix it on the plain,
To calm the god that holds the watery reign;
A threefold offering to his altar bring, 160
A bull, a ram, a boar; and hail the ocean king.
But home return'd, to each ethereal pow'r
Slay the due victim in the genial hour:
So peaceful shalt thou end thy blissful days,
And steal thyself from life by slow decays: 165

Unknown to pain, in age resign thy breath,
When late stern Neptune points the shaft with
death :

To the dark grave retiring as to rest,
Thy people blessing, by thy people bless'd !
“ ‘ Unerring truths, oh man, my lips relate ; 170
This is thy life to come, and this is fate.’

“ To whom unmoved : ‘ If this the gods prepare,
What Heaven ordains the wise with courage bear.
But say, why yonder on the lonely strands,
Unmindful of her son, Anticlea stands ? 175
Why to the ground she bends her downcast eye ?
Why is she silent, while her son is nigh ?
The latent cause, oh sacred seer, reveal !’

“ ‘ Nor this,’ replies the seer, ‘ will I conceal.
Know, to the spectres, that thy beverage taste, 180
The scenes of life recur, and actions pass’d :
They, seal’d with truth, return the sure reply ;
The rest, repell’d, a train oblivious fly.’

“ The phantom prophet ceased, and sunk from
sight 185
To the black palace of eternal night.

“ Still in the dark abodes of death I stood,
When near Anticlea moved, and drank the blood.
Straight all the mother in her soul awakes,
And, owning her Ulysses, thus she speaks : 189
‘ Comest thou, my son, alive, to realms beneath,
The dolesome realms of darkness and of death ?
Comest thou alive, from pure, ethereal day ?
Dire is the region, dismal is the way ;
Here lakes profound, there floods oppose their
waves,

There the wide sea with all his billows raves ! 195
Or, since to dust proud Troy submits her towers,
Comest thou a wanderer from the Phrygian shores ?
Or say, since honour call’d thee to the field,
Hast thou thy Ithaca, thy bride, beheld ?’

“ ‘ Source of my life,’ I cried, ‘ from earth I fly
To seek Tiresias in the nether sky, 201

To learn my doom : for, toss'd from wo to wo,
 In every land Ulysses finds a foe :
 Nor have these eyes beheld my native shores,
 Since in the dust proud Troy submits her towers.

“ ‘ But, when thy soul from her sweet mansion
 fled, 206

Say, what distemper gave thee to the dead ?
 Has life's fair lamp declined by slow decays,
 Or swift expired it in a sudden blaze ?
 Say, if my sire, good old Laertes, lives ? 210
 If yet Telemachus, my son, survives ?
 Say, by his rule is my dominion awed,
 Or crush'd by traitors with an iron rod ?
 Say, if my spouse maintains her royal trust ;
 Though tempted, chaste, and obstinately just ? 215
 Or if no more her absent lord she wails,
 But the false woman o'er the wife prevails ?”

“ Thus I, and thus the parent-shade returns :
 ‘ Thee, ~~ever~~ thee, thy faithful consort mourns :
 Whether the night descends or day prevails, 220
 Thee she by night, and thee by day bewails.
 Thee in Telemachus thy realm obeys ;
 In sacred groves celestial rites he pays,
 And shares the banquet in superior state,
 Graced with such honours as become the great. 225
 Thy sire in solitude foment his care :
 The court is joyless, for thou art not there !
 No costly carpets raise his hoary head,
 No rich embroidery shines to grace his bed ;
 Ev'n when keen winter freezes in the skies, 230
 Rank'd with his slaves, on earth the monarch lies :
 Deep are his sighs, his visage pale, his dress
 The garb of wo and habit of distress.
 And when the autumn takes his annual round,
 The leafy honours scattering on the ground, 235
 Regardless of his years, abroad he lies,
 His bed the leaves, his canopy the skies.
 Thus cares on cares his painful days consume,
 And bow his age with sorrow to the tomb !

“ ‘ For thee, my son, I wept my life away ; 240
 For thee through hell’s eternal dungeons stray :
 Nor came my fate by lingering pains and slow,
 Nor bent the silver-shafted queen her bow ;
 Nor dire disease bereaved me of my breath ;
 Thou, thou, my son, wert my disease and death ;
 Unkindly with my love my son conspired, 246
 For thee I lived, for absent thee expired.’

“ Thrice in my arms I strove her shade to bind,
 Thrice through my arms she slipp’d like empty wind,
 Or dreams, the vain illusions of the mind. 250
 Wild with despair, I shed a copious tide
 Of flowing tears, and thus with sighs replied :

“ ‘ Fliest thou, loved shade, while I thus fondly
 mourn ?

Turn to my arms, to my embraces turn !
 Is it, ye powers that smile at human harms ! 255.
 Too great a bliss to weep within her arms ?
 Or has hell’s queen an empty image sent,
 That wretched I might ev’n my joys lament ?’

“ ‘ Oh son of wo,’ the pensive shade rejoin’d,
 ‘ Oh most inured to grief of all mankind ! 260.
 ’Tis not the queen of hell who thee deceives ;
 All, all are such, when life the body leaves :
 No more the substance of the man remains,
 Nor bounds the blood along the purple veins :
 These the funereal flames in atoms bear, 265
 To wander with the wind in empty air :
 While the impassive soul reluctant flies,
 Like a vain dream, to these infernal skies.
 But from the dark dominions speed thy way,
 And climb the steep ascent to upper day ; 270
 To thy chaste bride the wondrous story tell,
 The woes, the horrors, and the laws of hell.’

“ Thus while she spoke, in swarms hell’s empress
 brings
 Daughters and wives of heroes and of kings ; 274
 Thick and more thick they gather round the blood,
 Ghost throned on ghost, a dire assembly, stood !

Dauntless my sword I seize; the airy crew,
Swift as it flash'd along the gloom, withdrew;
Then shade to shade in mutual forms succeeds,
Her race recounts, and their illustrious deeds. 280

“Tyro began, whom great Salmoneous bred;
The royal partner of famed Cretheus' bed.
For fair Enipeus, as from fruitful urns
He pours his watery store, the virgin burns;
Smooth flows the gentle stream with wanton pride,
And in soft mazes rolls a silver tide. 286

As on his banks the maid enamour'd roves,
The monarch of the deep beholds and loves:
In her Enipeus' form and borrow'd charms,
The amorous god descends into her arms: 290

Around, a spacious arch of waves he throws,
And high in air the liquid mountain rose;
Thus in surrounding floods conceal'd he proves
The pleasing transport, and completes his loves.
Then softly sighing, he the fair address'd, 295
And as he spoke her tender hand he press'd.

‘Hail, happy nymph! no vulgar births are owed
To the prolific raptures of a god:
Lo! when nine times the moon renews her horn,
Two brother heroes shall from thee be born; 300
Thy early care the future worthies claim,
To point them to the arduous paths of fame;
But in thy breast the important truth conceal,
Nor dare the secret of a god reveal: 304

For know, thou Neptune view'st! and at my nod
Earth trembles, and the waves confess their god.’

“He added not, but mounting spurn'd the plain,
Then plunged into the chambers of the main.

“Now in the time's full process forth she brings
Jove's dread vicegerents in two future kings; 310
O'er proud Iolcos Pelias stretch'd his reign,
And godlike Neleus ruled the Pylian plain:
Then, fruitful, to her Cretheus' royal bed
She gallant Pheres and famed Æson bred:

From the same fountain Amythaon rose, 315
Pleased with the din of war, and noble shout of foes.

“ There moved Antiope, with haughty charms,
Who bless'd the almighty Thunderer in her arms:
Hence sprung Amphion, hence brave Zethus came,
Founders of Thebes, and men of mighty name ; 320
Though bold in open field, they yet surround
The town with walls, and mound inject on mound ;
Here ramparts stood, there towers rose high in air,
And here through seven wide portals rush'd the war.

“ There with soft step the fair Alcmena trod, 325
Who bore Alcides to the thundering god :
And Megara, who charm'd the son of Jove,
And soften'd his stern soul to tender love.

“ Sullen and sour with discontented mien
Jocasta frown'd, the incestuous Theban queen ; 330
With her own son she join'd in nuptial bands,
Though father's blood imbrued his murderous hands :
The gods and men the dire offence detest,
The gods with all their furies rend his breast ;
In lofty Thebes he wore the imperial crown, 335
A pompous wretch ! accursed upon a throne.
The wife self-murder'd from a beam depends,
And her foul soul to blackest hell descends ;
Thence to her son the choicest plagues she brings,
And the fiends haunt him with a thousand stings.

“ And now the beauteous Chloris I descry, 341
A lovely shade, Amphion's youngest joy !
With gifts unnumber'd Neleus sought her arms,
Nor paid too dearly for unequall'd charms ;
Great in Orchomenos, in Pylos great, 345
He sway'd the sceptre with imperial state.
Three gallant sons the joyful monarch told,
Sage Nestor, Periclymenus the bold,
And Chromius last ; but of the softer race,
One nymph alone, a miracle of grace. 350
Kings on their thrones for lovely Pero burn ;
The sire denies, and kings rejected mourn.

To him alone the beauteous prize he yields,
 Whose arm should ravish from Phylacian fields
 The herds of Iphyclus, detain'd in wrong ; 355
 Wild, furious herds, unconquerably strong !
 This dares a seer, but naught the seer prevails,
 In beauty's cause illustriously he fails ;
 Twelve moons the foe the captive youth detains
 In painful dungeons, and coercive chains : 360
 The foe at last, from durance where he lay,
 His art revering, gave him back to day ;
 Won by prophetic knowledge, to fulfil
 The steadfast purpose of th' Almighty will.

“ With graceful port advancing now I spied 365
 Leda the fair, the godlike Tyndar's bride :
 Hence Pollux sprung, who wields with furious sway
 The deathful gauntlet, matchless in the fray ;
 And Castor glorious on th' embattled plain
 Curbs the proud steeds, reluctant to the rein : 370
 By turns they visit this ethereal sky,
 And live alternate, and alternate die :
 In hell beneath, on earth, in heaven above,
 Reign the twin gods, the favourite sons of Jove.

“ There Ephimedia trod the gloomy plain, 375
 Who charm'd the monarch of the boundless main ;
 Hence Ephialtes, hence stern Otus sprung,
 More fierce than giants, more than giants strong ;
 The earth o'erburden'd groan'd beneath their weight,
 None but Orion e'er surpass'd their height : 380
 The wondrous youths had scarce nine winters told,
 When high in air, tremendous to behold,
 Nine ells aloft they rear'd their towering head,
 And full nine cubits broad their shoulders spread.
 Proud of their strength, and more than mortal size,
 The gods they challenge, and affect the skies : 386
 Heaved on Olympus tottering Ossa stood ;
 On Ossa, Pelion nods with all his wood.
 Such were they youths ! had they to manhood
 grown,
 Almighty Jove had trembled on his throne : 390

But, ere the harvest of the beard began
To bristle on the chin, and promise man,
His shafts Apollo aim'd; at once they sound,
And stretch the giant monsters o'er the ground. 394

“There mournful Phædra with sad Procris moves,
Both beauteous shades, both hapless in their loves;
And near them walk'd, with solemn pace and slow,
Sad Ariadne, partner of their wo:

The royal Minos Ariadne bred,
She Theseus loved, from Crete with Theseus fled:
Swift to the Dian isle the hero flies, 401

And towards his Athens bears the lovely prize;
There Bacchus with fierce rage Diana fires,
The goddess aims her shaft, the nymph expires.

“There Clymene and Mera I behold, 405
There Eriphyle weeps, who loosely sold
Her lord, her honour, for the lust of gold.
But should I all recount, the night would fail,
Unequal to the melancholy tale:

And all-composing rest my nature craves, 410
Here in the court, or yonder on the waves;
In you I trust, and in the heavenly powers,
To land Ulysses on his native shores.”

He ceased; but left so charming on their ear
His voice, that listening still they seem'd to hear;
Till, rising up, Arete silence broke, 416
Stretch'd out her snowy hand, and thus she spoke:

“What wondrous man Heaven sends us in our
guest!

Through all his woes the hero shines confess'd;
His comely port, his ample frame express 420
A manly air, majestic in distress.

He, as my guest, is my peculiar care:
You share the pleasure, then in bounty share;
To worth in misery a reverence pay,
And with a generous hand reward his stay; 425
For since kind Heaven with wealth our realm has
bless'd,

Give it to Heaven, by aiding the distress'd.”

Then sage Echeneus, whose grave reverend brow
 The hand of time had silver'd o'er with snow,
 Mature in wisdom rose: "Your words," he cries,
 "Demand obedience, for your words are wise. 431
 But let our king direct the glorious way
 To generous acts: our part is to obey."

"While life informs these limbs," the king replied,
 "Well to deserve, be all my cares employ'd: 435
 But here this night the royal guest detain,
 Till the sun flames along the ethereal plain.
 Be it my task to send with ample stores
 The stranger from our hospitable shores:
 Tread you my steps! 'Tis mine to lead the race,
 The first in glory, as the first in place." 441

To whom the prince: "This night with joy I stay:
 Oh monarch great in virtue as in sway!
 If thou the circling year my stay control,
 To raise a bounty noble as thy soul; 445
 The circling year I wait, with ampler stores
 And fitter pomp to hail my native shores:
 Then by my realms due homage would be paid;
 For wealthy kings are loyally obey'd!" 449

"Oh king! for such thou art, and sure thy blood
 Through veins," he cried, "of royal fathers flow'd;
 Unlike those vagrants who on falsehood live,
 Skill'd in smooth tales, and artful to deceive;
 Thy better soul abhors the liar's part,
 Wise is thy voice, and noble is thy heart. 455
 Thy words like music every breast control,
 Steal through the ear, and win upon the soul;
 Soft, as some song divine, thy story flows,
 Nor better could the muse record thy woes.

"But say, upon the dark and dismal coast, 460
 Saw'st thou the worthies of the Grecian host?
 The godlike leaders who, in battle slain,
 Fell before 'Troy, and nobly press'd the plain?
 And lo! a length of night behind remains,
 The evening stars still mount the ethereal plains.

Thy tale with raptures I could hear thee tell, 466
 Thy woes on earth, the wondrous scenes in hell,
 Till in the vault of heaven the stars decay,
 And the sky reddens with the rising day."

"Oh worthy of the power the gods assign'd," 470
 Ulysses thus replies, "a king in mind!
 Since yet the early hour of night allows
 Time for discourse, and time for soft repose,
 If scenes of misery can entertain,
 Woes I unfold, of woes a dismal train. 475
 Prepare to hear of murder and of blood;
 Of godlike heroes who uninjured stood
 Amid a war of spears in foreign lands,
 Yet bled at home, and bled by female hands.

"Now summon'd Proserpine to hell's black hall
 The heroine shades; they vanish'd at her call. 481

"When lo! advanced the forms of heroes slain
 By stern Ægisthus, a majestic train,
 And high above the rest, Atrides press'd the plain.
 He quaff'd the gore; and straight his soldier knew,
 And from his eyes pour'd down the tender dew:
 His arms he stretch'd; his arms the touch deceive,
 Nor in the fond embrace embraces give:
 His substance vanish'd, and his strength decay'd,
 Now all Atrides is an empty shade. 490

"Moved at the sight, I for a space resign'd
 To soft affliction all my manly mind;
 At last with tears—'Oh what relentless doom,
 Imperial phantom, bow'd thee to the tomb?
 Say while the sea, and while the tempest raves, 495
 Has fate oppress'd thee in the roaring waves,
 Or nobly seized thee in the dire alarms
 Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms?"

"The ghost returns: 'Oh chief of human kind
 For active courage and a patient mind; 500
 Nor while the sea, nor while the tempest raves,
 Has fate oppress'd me on the roaring waves!
 Nor nobly seized me in the dire alarms
 Of war and slaughter, and the clash of arms.

Stabb'd by a murderous hand, Atrides died, 505
A foul adulterer, and a faithless bride ;
Ev'n in my mirth, and at the friendly feast,
O'er the full bowl, the traitor stabb'd his guest :
Thus by the gory arm of slaughter falls
The stately ox, and bleeds within the stalls. 510
But not with me the direful murder ends,
These, these expired ! their crime, they were my
friends :

Thick as the boars, which some luxurious lord
Kills for the feast, to crown the nuptial board.
When war has thunder'd with its loudest storms,
Death thou hast seen in all her ghastly forms ; 516
In duel met her on the listed ground,
When hand to hand they wound return for wound ;
But never have thy eyes astonish'd view'd
So vile a deed, so dire a scene of blood. 520
Ev'n in the flow of joy, when now the bowl
Glows in our veins, and opens every soul,
We groan, we faint ; with blood the dome is died,
And o'er the pavement floats the dreadful tide—
Her breast all gore, with lamentable cries, 525
The bleeding innocent Cassandra dies !
Then though pale death froze cold in every vein,
My sword I strive to wield, but strive in vain :
Nor did my traitress wife these eyelids close,
Or decently in death my limbs compose. 530
Oh woman, woman, when to ill thy mind
Is bent, all hell contains no fouler fiend :
And such was mine ! who basely plunged her sword
Through the fond bosom where she reign'd adored !
Alas ! I hoped, the toils of war o'ercome, 535
To meet soft quiet and repose at home ;
Delusive hope ! oh wife, thy deeds disgrace
The perjured sex, and blacken all the race ;
And should posterity one virtuous find,
Name Clytemnestra, they will curse the kind.' 540
“ ‘ Oh injured shade,’ I cried, ‘ what mighty woes
To thy imperial race from woman rose !

By woman here thou tread'st this mournful strand,
And Greece by woman lies a desert land.'

“ ‘Warn'd by my ills, beware,’ the shade replies,
‘Nor trust the sex that is so rarely wise ; 546
When earnest to explore thy secret breast,
Unfold some trifle, but conceal the rest.

But in thy consort cease to fear a foe,
For thee she feels sincerity of wo : 550

When Troy first bled beneath the Grecian arms,
She shone unrivall'd with a blaze of charms ;
Thy infant son her fragrant bosom press'd,
Hung at her knee, or wanton'd at her breast ;
But now the years a numerous train have ran : 555
The blooming boy is ripen'd into man :

Thy eyes shall see him burn with noble fire,
The sire shall bless his son, the son his sire :
But my Orestes never met these eyes,
Without one look the murder'd father dies ; 560

Then from a wretched friend this wisdom learn,
Ev'n to thy queen disguised, unknown, return ;
For since of woman kind so few are just,
Think all are false, nor ev'n the faithful trust.

“ ‘But say, resides my son in royal port, 565
In rich Orchomenos, or Sparta's court ?

Or say in Pyle ? for yet he views the light,
Nor glides a phantom through the realms of night.’

“ Then I : ‘Thy suit is vain, nor can I say
If yet he breathes in realms of cheerful day ; 570
Or pale or wan beholds these nether skies :
Truth I revere, for wisdom never lies.’

“ Thus in a tide of tears our sorrows flow,
And add new horror to the realms of wo ;
Till side by side along the dreary coast 575

Advanced Achilles' and Patroclus' ghost,
A friendly pair ! near these the Pylian stray'd,
And towering Ajax, an illustrious shade !

War was his joy, and pleased with loud alarms,
None but Pelides brighter shone in arms. 580

“Through the thick gloom his friend Achilles
knew,

And as he speaks the tears descend in dew :

“‘Comest thou alive to view the Stygian bounds,
Where the wan spectres walk eternal rounds;
Nor fear'st the dark and dismal waste to tread, 585
Thronged with pale ghosts, familiar with the dead?’

“To whom with sighs: ‘I pass these dreadful
gates

To seek the Theban, and consult the fates :
For still, distress'd, I rove from coast to coast,
Lost to my friends, and to my country lost. 590
But sure the eye of Time beholds no name
So bless'd as thine in all the rolls of fame;
Alive we hail'd thee with our guardian gods,
And dead thou rul'st a king in these abodes.’

“‘Talk not of ruling in this dolorous gloom, 595
Nor think vain words,’ he cried, ‘can ease my doom.
Rather I'd choose laboriously to bear
A weight of woes, and breathe the vital air,
A slave to some poor hind that toils for bread,
Than reign the sceptred monarch of the dead. 600
But say, if in my steps my son proceeds,
And emulates his godlike father's deeds?
If at the clash of arms, and shout of foes,
Swells his bold heart, his bosom nobly glows?
Say, if my sire, the reverend Peleus reigns, 605
Great in his Phthia, and his throne maintains;
Or, weak and old, my youthful arm demands,
To fix the sceptre steadfast in his hands?
Oh might the lamp of life rekindled burn,
And death release me from the silent urn! 610
This arm that thunder'd o'er the Phrygian plain,
And swell'd the ground with mountains of the slain,
Should vindicate my injured father's fame,
Crush the proud rebel, and assert his claim.’

“‘Illustrious shade,’ I cried, ‘of Peleus' fates
No circumstance the voice of fame relates: 616

But hear with pleased attention the renown,
The wars, and wisdom of thy gallant son.
With me from Scyros to the field of fame
Radiant in arms the blooming hero came. 620
When Greece assembled all her hundred states,
To ripen counsels, and decide debates,
Heavens ! how he charm'd us with a flow of sense,
And won the heart with manly eloquence !
He first was seen of all the peers to rise, 625
The third in wisdom, where they all were wise ;
But when, to try the fortune of the day,
Host moved towards host in terrible array,
Before the van, impatient for the fight,
With martial port he strode, and stern delight : 630
Heaps strew'd on heaps beneath his falchion groan'd,
And monuments of dead deform'd the ground.
The time would fail should I in order tell
What foes were vanquish'd, and what numbers fell :
How, lost through love, Eurypylus was slain, 635
And round him bled his bold Cetæan train.
To Troy no hero came of nobler line,
Or if of nobler, Memnon, it was thine.
“ When Ilion in the horse received her doom,
And unseen armies ambush'd in its womb, 640
Greece gave her latent warriors to my care,
'Twas mine on Troy to pour the imprison'd war :
Then when the boldest bosom beat with fear,
When the stern eyes of heroes dropp'd a tear ;
Fierce in his look his ardent valour glow'd, 645
Flush'd in his cheek, or sallied in his blood ;
Indignant in the dark recess he stands,
Pants for the battle, and the war demands :
His voice breathed death, and with a martial air 649
He grasp'd his sword, and shook his glittering spear.
And when the gods our arms with conquest crown'd,
When Troy's proud bulwarks smoked upon the
ground,
Greece, to reward her soldier's gallant toils,
Heap'd high his navy with unnumber'd spoils.

“ ‘ Thus great in glory, from the din of war 655
Safe he return’d without one hostile scar ;
Though spears in iron tempests rain’d around,
Yet innocent they play’d, and guiltless of a wound.’

“ While yet I spoke, the shade with transport
 glow’d,
Rose in his majesty, and nobler trod ; 660
With haughty stalk he sought the distant glades
Of warrior kings, and join’d the illustrious shades.

“ Now without number ghost by ghost arose,
All wailing with unutterable woes.
Alone, apart, in discontented mood, 665
A gloomy shade, the sullen Ajax stood ;
For ever sad, with proud disdain he pined,
And the lost arms for ever stung his mind ;
Though to the contest Thetis gave the laws,
And Pallas, by the Trojans judg’d the cause. 670
Oh why was I victorious in the strife ?
Oh dear-bought honour with so brave a life !
With him the strength of war, the soldier’s pride,
Our second hope to great Achilles, died !
Touch’d at the sight from tears I scarce refrain, 675
And tender sorrow thrills in every vein ;
Pensive and sad I stand, at length accost
With accents mild the inexorable ghost :

“ ‘ Still burns thy rage ? and can brave souls re-
 sent
Ev’n after death ? Relent, great shade, relent ! 680
Perish those arms which by the gods’ decree
Accursed our army with the loss of thee !
With thee we fell ; Greece wept thy hapless fates,
And shook astonish’d through her hundred states ;
Not more, when great Achilles press’d the ground,
And breathed his manly spirit through the wound.
Oh deem thy fall not owed to man’s decree,
Jove hated Greece, and punish’d Greece in thee !
Turn then, oh peaceful turn, thy wrath control,
And calm the raging tempest of thy soul.’ 690

“ While yet I speak, the shade disdains to stay,
In silence turns, and sullen stalks away.

“ Touch’d at his sour retreat, through deepest night,
Through hell’s black bounds I had pursued his flight,
And forced the stubborn spectre to reply : 695
But wondrous visions drew my curious eye.

High on a throne, tremendous to behold,
Stern Minos waves a mace of burnish’d gold ;
Around ten thousand thousand spectres stand
Through the wide dome of Dis, a trembling band.
Still as they plead, the fatal lots he rolls, 701
Absolves the just, and dooms the guilty souls.

“ There huge Orion, of portentous size,
Swift through the gloom a giant hunter flies :
A ponderous mace of brass with direful sway 705
Aloft he whirls, to crush the savage prey !
Stern beasts in trains that by his truncheon fell,
Now grisly forms, shoot o’er the lawns of hell.

“ There Tityus, large and long, in fetters bound,
O’erspreads nine acres of infernal ground ; 710
Two ravenous vultures, furious for their food,
Scream o’er the fiend, and riot in his blood,
Incessant gore the liver in his breast,
The immortal liver grows, and gives the immortal
feast ;

For as o’er Panope’s enamell’d plains 715
Latona journeyed to the Pythian fanes,
With haughty love the audacious monster strove
To force the goddess, and to rival Jove.

“ There Tantalus along the Stygian bounds
Pours out deep groans ; (with groans all hell re-
sounds ;) 720

Ev’n in the circling floods refreshment craves,
And pines with thirst amid a sea of waves ;

When to the water he his lip applies,
Back from his lip the treacherous water flies.
Above, beneath, around, his hapless head, 725
Trees of all kinds delicious fruitage spread ;

There figs sky-died, a purple hue disclose,
Green looks the olive, the pomegranate glows,
There dangling pears exalting scents unfold,
And yellow apples ripen into gold : 730
The fruit he strives to seize ; but blasts arise,
Toss it on high, and whirl it to the skies.

“ I turn’d my eye, and as I turn’d survey’d
A mournful vision ! the Sisyphean shade ;
With many a weary step, and many a groan, 735
Up the high hill he heaves a huge round stone ;
The huge round stone, resulting with a bound,
Thunders impetuous down, and smokes along the
ground.

Again the restless orb his toil renews, 739
Dust mounts in clouds, and sweat descends in dew.

“ Now I the strength of Hercules behold,
A towering spectre of gigantic mould,
A shadowy form ! for high in heaven’s abodes
Himself resides, a god among the gods ;
There, in the bright assemblies of the skies, 745
He nectar quaffs, and Hebe crowns his joys.
Here hovering ghosts, like fowl, his shade surround,
And clang their pinions with terrific sound ;
Gloomy as night he stands, in act to throw
The aerial arrow from the twanging bow. 750
Around his breast a wondrous zone is roll’d,
Where woodland monsters grin in fretted gold :
There sullen lions sternly seem to roar,
The bear to growl, to foam the tusky boar ;
There war, and havoc, and destruction stood, 755
And vengeful murder red with human blood.
Thus terribly adorn’d the figures shine,
Inimitably wrought with skill divine.
The mighty ghost advanced with awful look,
And, turning his grim visage, sternly spoke : 760

“ Oh exercised in grief ! by arts refined !
Oh taught to bear the wrongs of base mankind !
Such, such was I ! still toss’d from care to care,
While in your world I drew the vital air !

· Ev'n I, who from the Lord of Thunders rose, 765
 Bore toils and dangers, and a weight of woes;
 'To a base monarch still a slave confined,
 (The hardest bondage to a generous mind!)
 Down to these worlds I trod the dismal way,
 And dragged the three-mouth'd dog to upper day;
 Ev'n hell I conquer'd, through the friendly aid 770
 Of Maia's offspring and the martial maid.'

" Thus he, nor deign'd for our reply to stay,
 But, turning, stalk'd with giant strides away.

" Curious to view the kings of ancient days, 775
 The mighty dead that live in endless praise,
 Resolved I stand; and haply had survey'd
 The godlike 'Theseus, and Pirithous' shade;
 But swarms of spectres rose from deepest hell,
 With bloodless visage, and with hideous yell, 780
 They scream, they shriek; sad groans and dismal
 sounds

Stun my scared ears, and pierce hells utmost bounds,
 No more my heart the dismal din sustains,
 And my cold blood hangs shivering in my veins;
 Lest Gorgon, rising from the infernal lakes, 785
 With horrors arm'd, and curls of hissing snakes,
 Should fix me, stiffen'd at the monstrous sight,
 A stony image in eternal night!

Straight from the direful coast to purer air
 I sped my flight, and to my mates repair. 790
 My mates ascend the ship; they strike their oars;
 The mountains lessen, and retreat the shores:
 Swift o'er the waves we fly; the freshening gales
 Sing through the shrouds, and stretch the swelling
 sails.

BOOK XII.

ARGUMENT.

The Sirens, Scylla, and Charybdis.

HE relates how, after his return from the shades, he was sent by Circe on his voyage, by the coast of the Sirens, and by the strait of Scylla and Charybdis : the manner in which he escaped those dangers : how, being cast on the island Trinacria, his companions destroyed the oxen of the Sun : the vengeance that followed : how all perished by shipwreck except himself, who, swimming on the mast of the ship, arrived on the island of Calypso—With which his narration concludes.

“ Thus o’er the rolling surge the vessel flies,
Till from the waves the Ææan hills arise.
Here the gay Morn resides in radiant bowers,
Here keeps her revels with the dancing Hours :
Here Phœbus rising in the ethereal way, 5
Through heaven’s bright portals pours the beamy
day.

At once we fix our halsers on the land,
At once descend, and press the desert sand ;
There, worn and wasted, lose our cares in sleep
To the hoarse murmurs of the rolling deep. 10

“ Soon as the morn restored the day, we paid
Sepulchral honours to Elpenor’s shade.
Now by the axe the rushing forest bends,
And the huge pile along the shore ascends.
Around we stand, a melancholy train, 15
And a loud groan re-echoes from the main.
Fierce o’er the pyre, by fanning breezes spread,
The hungry flame devours the silent dead.

A rising tomb, the silent dead to grace,
Fast by the roarings of the main we place ; 20
The rising tomb a lofty column bore,
And high above it rose the tapering oar.

“ Meantime the goddess our return survey’d
From the pale ghosts, and hell’s tremendous shade.
Swift she descends : a train of nymphs divine 25
Bear the rich viands and the generous wine :

In act to speak the power of magic stands,
And graceful thus accosts the listening bands :

“ ‘ Oh sons of wo ! decreed by adverse fates
Alive to pass through hell’s eternal gates ! 30
All, soon or late, are doomed that path to tread ;
More wretched you ! twice number’d with the
dead !

This day adjourn your cares, exalt your souls,
Indulge the taste, and drain the sparkling bowls ,
And when the morn unveils her saffron ray, 35
Spread your broad sails, and plough the liquid way :
Lo I this night, your faithful guide, explain
Your woes by land, your dangers on the main.’

“ The goddess spoke : in feasts we waste the day,
Till Phœbus downward plunged his burning ray ; 40
Then sable night ascends, and balmy rest
Seals every eye, and calms the troubled breast.
Then curious she commands me to relate
The dreadful scenes of Pluto’s dreary state.
She sat in silence while the tale I tell, 45
The wondrous visions, and the laws of hell.

“ Then thus : ‘ The lot of man the gods dispose ;
These ills are past : now hear thy future woes.
Oh prince, attend ! some favouring power be kind,
And print the important story on thy mind ! 50

“ ‘ Next, where the Sirens dwell, you plough the
seas ;
Their song is death, and makes destruction please.
Unbless’d the man, whom music wins to stay
Nigh the cursed shore, and listen to the lay.

No more that wretch shall view the joys of life, 55
His blooming offspring, or his beauteous wife !
In verdant meads they sport ; and wide around
Lie human bones, that whiten all the ground ;
The ground polluted floats with human gore,
And human carnage taints the dreadful shore. 60
Fly swift the dangerous coast ; let every ear
Be stopp'd against the song ! 'tis death to hear !
Firm to the mast with chains thyself be bound,
Nor trust thy virtue to the enchanting sound.
If, mad with transport, freedom thou demand, 65
Be every fetter strain'd, and added band to band.

“ These seas o'erpass'd, be wise ! but I refrain
To mark distinct thy voyage o'er the main :
New horrors rise ! let prudence be thy guide,
And guard thy various passage through the tide. 70

“ High o'er the main two rocks exalt their brow,
The boiling billows thundering roll below ;
Through the vast waves the dreadful wonders move,
Hence named Erratic by the gods above.
No bird of air, no dove of swiftest wing, 75
That bears ambrosia to the ethereal king,
Shuns the dire rocks : in vain she cuts the skies,
The dire rocks meet, and crush her as she flies ;
Not the fleet bark, when prosperous breezes play,
Ploughs o'er that roaring surge its desperate way ;
O'erwhelm'd it sinks : while round a smoke expires,
And the waves flashing seem to burn with fires.
Scarce the famed Argo pass'd these raging floods,
The sacred Argo, fill'd with demigods !

Ev'n she had sunk, but Jove's imperial bride 85
Wing'd her fleet sail, and push'd her o'er the tide.

“ High in the air the rock its summit shrouds
In brooding tempests, and in rolling clouds ;
Loud storms around, and mists eternal rise,
Beat its bleak brow, and intercept the skies. 90
When all the broad expansion bright with day
Glow with the autumnal or the summer ray,

The summer and the autumn glow in vain,
 The sky for ever lowers, for ever clouds remain.
 Impervious to the step of man it stands, 95
 Though borne by twenty feet, though arm'd with
 twenty hands ;

Smooth as the polish of the mirror rise
 The slippery sides, and shoot into the skies.
 Full in the centre of this rock display'd,
 A yawning cavern casts a dreadful shade : 100
 Nor the fleet arrow from the twanging bow,
 Sent with full force, could reach the depth below.

Wide to the west the horrid gulf extends,
 And the dire passage down to hell descends.
 Oh fly the dreadful sight ! expand thy sails, 105
 Ply the strong oar, and catch the nimble gales ;

Here Scylla bellows from her dire abodes,
 Tremendous pest, abhorr'd by man and gods !
 Hideous her voice, and with less terrors roar
 The whelps of lions in the midnight hour. 110

Twelve feet deform'd and foul the fiend dispreads ;
 Six horrid necks she rears, and six terrific heads ;
 Her jaws grin dreadful with three rows of teeth ;
 Jaggy they stand, the gaping den of death ;
 Her parts obscene the raging billows hide ; 115
 Her bosom terribly o'erlooks the tide.

When stung with hunger she embroils the flood,
 The sea dog and the dolphin are her food ;
 She makes the huge leviathan her prey,
 And all the monsters of the watery way ; 120

The swiftest racer of the azure plain
 Here fills her sails, and spreads her oars in vain ;
 Fell Scylla rises, in her fury roars ;
 At once six mouths expands, at once six men de-
 vours.

“ Close by, a rock of less enormous height 125
 Breaks the wild waves, and forms a dangerous
 strait ;

Full on its crown a fig's green branches rise,
 And shoot a leafy forest to the skies ;

Beneath, Charybdis holds her boisterous reign
Mid roaring whirlpools, and absorbs the main ; 130
Thrice in her gulfs the boiling seas subside,
Thrice in dire thunders she refunds the tide.
Oh, if thy vessel plough the direful waves
When seas retreating roar within her caves,
Ye perish all ! though he who rules the main 135
Lend his strong aid, his aid he lends in vain.
Ah, shun the horrid gulf ! by Scylla fly,
Tis better six to lose, than all to die.'

"I then : 'Oh nymph propitious to my prayer,
Goddess divine, my guardian power, declare, 140
Is the foul fiend from human vengeance freed ?
Or, if I rise in arms, can Scylla bleed ?'

"Then she : 'Oh worn by toils, oh broke in fight,
Still are new toils and war thy dire delight ?
Will martial flames for ever fire thy mind, 145
And never, never be to Heaven resign'd ?
How vain thy efforts to avenge the wrong !
Deathless the pest ! impenetrably strong !
Furious and fell, tremendous to behold !
Ev'n with a look she withers all the bold ! 150
She mocks the weak attempts of human might :
Oh fly her rage ! thy conquest is thy flight.
If but to seize thy arms thou make delay,
Again the fury vindicates her prey,
Her six mouths yawn, and six are snatch'd away.
From her foul womb Crataëis gave to air 156
This dreadful pest ! To her direct thy prayer,
To curb the monster in her dire abodes,
And guard thee through the tumult of the floods.
Thence to Trinacria's shore you bend your way, 160
Where graze thy herds, illustrious source of day !
Seven herds, seven flocks enrich the sacred plains,
Each herd, each flock, full fifty heads contains ;
The wondrous kind a length of age survey,
By breed increase not, nor by death decay. 165
Two sister goddesses possess the plain,
The constant guardians of the woolly train :

Lampetie fair, and Phaethusa young,
 From Phœbus and the bright Neæra sprung:
 Here, watchful o'er the flocks, in shady bowers 170
 And flowery meads they waste the joyous hours.
 Rob not the god! and so propitious gales
 Attend thy voyage, and impel thy sails;
 But if thy impious hands the flocks destroy,
 The gods, the gods avenge it, and ye die! 175
 'Tis thine alone, (thy friends and navy lost,)
 Through tedious toils to view thy native coast.'

"She ceased: and now arose the morning ray;
 Swift to her dome the goddess held her way.
 Then to my mates I measured back the plain, 180
 Climb'd the tall bark, and rush'd into the main;
 Then bending to the stroke, their oars they drew
 To their broad breasts, and swift the galley flew.
 Up sprung a brisker breeze; with freshening gales
 The friendly goddess stretch'd the swelling sails;
 We drop our oars; at ease the pilot guides; 186
 The vessel light along the level glides.
 When, rising sad and slow, with pensive look,
 Thus to the melancholy train I spoke:

" "Oh friends, oh ever partners of my woes, 190
 Attend while I what Heaven foredooms disclose.
 Hear all! fate hangs o'er all; on you it lies
 To live or perish! to be safe, be wise!

" "In flowery meads the sportive Sirens play,
 Touch the soft lyre, and tune the vocal lay; 195
 Me, me alone, with fetters firmly bound,
 The gods allow to hear the dangerous sound.
 Hear and obey; if freedom I demand,
 Be every fetter strain'd, be added band to band.'

"While yet I speak the winged galley flies, 200
 And lo! the Siren shores like mists arise.
 Sunk were at once the winds; the air above,
 And waves below, at once forgot to move:
 Some demon calm'd the air, and smoothed the deep,
 Hush'd the loud winds, and charm'd the waves to
 sleep. 205

Now every sail we furl, each oar we ply ;
Lash'd by the stroke, the frothy waters fly.
The ductile wax with busy hands I mould,
And cleft in fragments, and the fragments roll'd :
The aerial region now grew warm with day, 210
The wax dissolved beneath the burning ray ;
Then every ear I barr'd against the strain,
And from access of phrensy lock'd the brain.
Now round the masts my mates the fetters roll'd,
And bound me limb by limb with fold on fold. 215
Then bending to the stroke, the active train
Plunge all at once their oars, and cleave the main.

“ While to the shore the rapid vessel flies,
Our swift approach the Siren choir describes ;
Celestial music warbles from their tongue, 220
And thus the sweet deluders tune the song :

“ ‘ Oh stay, oh pride of Greece ! Ulysses, stay !
Oh cease thy course, and listen to our lay !
Bless'd is the man ordain'd our voice to hear, 224
The song instructs the soul, and charms the ear.
Approach ! thy soul shall into raptures rise !
Approach ! and learn new wisdom from the wise !
We know whate'er the kings of mighty name
Achieved at Ilion in the field of fame ;
Whate'er beneath the sun's bright journey lies. 230
Oh stay, and learn new wisdom from the wise ! ”

“ Thus the sweet charmers warbled o'er the main ,
My soul takes wing to meet the heavenly strain ;
I give the sign, and struggle to be free :
Swift row my mates, and shoot along the sea ; 235
New chains they add, and rapid urge the way,
Till, dying off, the distant sounds decay :
Then, scudding swiftly from the dangerous ground,
The deafen'd ear unlock'd, the chains unbound.

“ Now all at once tremendous scenes unfold ; 240
Thunder'd the deeps, the smoking billows roll'd !
Tumultuous waves embroil the bellowing flood,
All trembling, deafen'd, and aghast we stood !

No more the vessel plough'd the dreadful wave,
 Fear seized the mighty, and unnerved the brave :
 Each dropp'd his oar : but swift from man to man
 With looks serene I turn'd, and thus began :
 ' Oh friends ! oh often tried in adverse storms !
 With ills familiar in more dreadful forms !
 Deep in the dire Cyclopean den you lay, 250
 Yet safe return'd—Ulysses led the way.
 Learn courage hence, and in my care confide :
 Lo ! still the same Ulysses is your guide.
 Attend my words ! your oars incessant ply ;
 Strain every nerve, and bid the vessel fly. 255
 If from yon justling rocks and wavy war
 Jove safety grants, he grants it to your care.
 And thou, whose guiding hand directs our way,
 Pilot, attentive listen and obey ! 259
 Bear wide thy course, nor plough those angry waves
 Where rolls yon smoke, yon tumbling ocean raves :
 Steer by the higher rock ; lest whirl'd around
 We sink, beneath the circling eddy drown'd.'

" While yet I speak, at once their oars they seize,
 Stretch to the stroke, and brush the working seas.
 Cautious the name of Scylla I suppress'd ;
 That dreadful sound had chill'd the boldest breast.

" Meantime, forgetful of the voice divine,
 All dreadful bright my limbs in armour shine ;
 High on the deck I take my dangerous stand, 270
 Two glittering javelins lighten in my hand ;
 Prepared to whirl the whizzing spear I stay,
 Till the fell fiend arise to seize her prey.
 Around the dungeon, studious to behold
 The hideous pest, my labouring eyes I roll'd ; 275
 In vain ! the dismal dungeon dark as night
 Veils the dire monster, and confounds the sight.

" Now through the rocks, appall'd with deep
 dismay,
 We bend our course, and stem the desperate way ;
 Dire Scylla there a scene of horror forms, 280
 And here Charybdis fills the deep with storms.

When the tide rushes from her rumbling caves,
The rough rock roars; tumultuous boil the waves;
They toss, they foam, a wild confusion raise,
Like waters bubbling o'er the fiery blaze; 285
Eternal mists obscure the aerial plain,
And high above the rock she spouts the main:
When in her gulfs the rushing sea subsides,
She drains the ocean with the reflux tides:
The rock rebellows with a thundering sound; 290
Deep, wondrous deep, below appears the ground.

“Struck with despair, with trembling hearts we
view'd

The yawning dungeon, and the tumbling flood;
When lo! fierce Scylla stoop'd to seize her prey,
Stretch'd her dire jaws, and swept six men away,
Chiefs of renown! loud-echoing shrieks arise: 296
I turn, and view them quivering in the skies;
They call, and aid with outstretch'd arms implore:
In vain they call! those arms are stretch'd no more.
As from some rock that overhangs the flood, 300
The silent fisher casts the insidious food,
With fraudulent care he waits the finny prize,
And sudden lifts it quivering to the skies:
So the foul monster lifts her prey on high,
So pant the wretches struggling in the sky: 305
In the wide dungeon she devours her food,
And the flesh trembles while she churns the blood.
Worn as I am with griefs, with care decay'd,
Never, I never scene so dire survey'd!
My shivering blood, congeal'd, forgot to flow; 310
Aghast I stood, a monument of woe!

“Now from the rocks the rapid vessel flies,
And the hoarse din like distant thunder dies;
To Sol's bright isle our voyage we pursue,
And now the glittering mountains rise to view. 315
There, sacred to the radiant god of day,
Graze the fair herds, the flocks promiscuous stray;
Then suddenly was heard along the main
To low the ox, to bleat the woolly train.

Straight to my anxious thoughts the sound convey'd
The words of Circe and the Theban shade ; 321
Warn'd by their awful voice these shores to shun,
With cautious fears oppress'd, I thus begun :

“ ‘ Oh friends ! oh ever exercised in care !
Hear Heaven's commands, and reverence what ye
hear ! 325

To fly these shores the prescient Theban shade
And Circe warn ! oh be their voice obey'd :
Some mighty wo relentless Heaven forebodes :
Fly these dire regions, and revere the gods ! ’

“ While yet I spoke, a sudden sorrow ran 330
Through every breast, and spread from man to man,
Till wrathful thus Eurylochus began :

“ ‘ Oh cruel thou ! some fury sure has steel'd
That stubborn soul, by toil untaught to yield !
From sleep debarr'd, we sink from woes to woes ;
And cruel, enviest thou a short repose ? 336

Still must we restless rove, new seas explore,
The sun descending, and so near the shore ?
And lo ! the night begins her gloomy reign,
And doubles all the terrors of the main. 340

Oft in the dead of night loud winds arise,
Lash the wild surge, and bluster in the skies ;
Oh should the fierce southwest his rage display,
And toss with rising storms the watery way,
Though gods descend from heaven's aerial plain 345
To lend us aid, the gods descend in vain ;

Then while the night displays her awful shade,
Sweet time of slumber ! be the night obey'd !
Haste ye to land ! and when the morning ray
Sheds her bright beams, pursue the destined way.’
A sudden joy in every bosom rose : 351

So will'd some dem'n, minister of woes !

“ To whom with grief : ‘ Oh swift to be undone,
Constrain'd I act what wisdom bids me shun.
But yonder herds and yonder flocks forbear ; 355
Attest the heavens, and call the gods to hear :

Content, an innocent repast display,
By Circe given, and fly the dangerous prey.'

"Thus I: and while to shore the vessel flies,
With hands uplifted they attest the skies; 360
Then, where a fountain's gurgling waters play,
They rush to land, and end in feasts the day:
They feed, they quaff; and now their hunger fled,
Sigh for their friends devour'd, and mourn the
dead,

Nor cease the tears till each in slumber shares 365
A sweet forgetfulness of human cares.

"Now far the night advanced her gloomy reign,
And setting stars roll'd down the azure plain:
When, at the voice of Jove, wild whirlwinds rise,
And clouds and double darkness veil the skies; 370
The moon, the stars, the bright ethereal host
Seem as extinct, and all their splendours lost;
The furious tempest roars with dreadful sound:
Air thunders, rolls the ocean, groans the ground.
All night it raged: when morning rose, to land 375
We haul'd our bark, and moor'd it on the strand,
Where in a beauteous grotto's cool recess
Dance the green Nereids of the neighbouring seas.

"There while the wild winds whistled o'er the
main,
Thus careful I address'd the listening train: 380
"Oh friends, be wise! nor dare the flocks de-
stroy

Of these fair pastures: if ye touch, ye die.
Warn'd by the high command of Heaven, be awed;
Holy the flocks, and dreadful is the god!
That god who spreads the radiant beams of light,
And views wide earth and heaven's unmeasured
height.' 386

"And now the moon had run her monthly round,
The southeast blustering with a dreadful sound:
Unhurt the beeves, untouch'd the woolly train,
Low through the grove, or range the flowery plain:

Then fail'd our food; then fish we make our prey,
Or fowl that screaming haunt the watery way.
Till now, from sea or flood no succour found,
Famine and meager want besieged us round.
Pensive and pale, from grove to grove I stray'd, 395
From the loud storms to find a sylvan shade;
There o'er my hands the living wave I pour;
And Heaven and Heaven's immortal thrones adore,
To calm the roarings of the stormy main,
And grant me peaceful to my realms again. 400
Then o'er my eyes the gods soft slumber shed,
While thus Eurylochus, arising, said:

“ ‘ Oh friends, a thousand ways frail mortals lead
To the cold tomb, and dreadful all to tread;
But dreadful most, when by a slow decay 405
Pale hunger wastes the manly strength away.
Why cease ye then to implore the powers above,
And offer hecatombs to thundering Jove?
Why seize ye not yon beeves, and fleecy prey?
Arise unanimous; arise and slay! 410
And if the gods ordain a safe return,
To Phœbus shrines shall rise, and altars burn.
But, should the powers that o'er mankind preside
Decree to plunge us in the whelming tide,
Better to rush at once to shades below, 415
Than linger life away, and nourish wo!’

“ Thus he: the beeves around securely stray,
When swift to ruin they invade the prey;
They seize, they kill!—but for the rite divine,
The barley fail'd, and for libations wine. 420
Swift from the oak they strip the shady pride;
And verdant leaves the flowery cake supplied.

“ With prayer they now address the ethereal train,
Slay the selected beeves, and flay the slain:
The thighs, with fat involved, divide with art, 425
Strew'd o'er with morsels cut from every part.
Water, instead of wine, is brought in urns,
And pour'd profanely as the victim burns.

The thighs thus offer'd, and the entrails dress'd, 429
They roast the fragments, and prepare the feast.

" 'Twas then soft slumber fled my troubled brain ;
Back to the bark I speed along the main.

When lo ! an odour from the feast exhales,
Spreads o'er the coast, and scents the tainted gales ;
A chilly fear congeal'd my vital blood, 435
And thus, obtesting Heaven, I mourn'd aloud :

" ' Oh sire of men and gods, immortal Jove !
Oh all ye blissful powers that reign above !
Why were my cares beguiled in short repose ?
Oh fatal slumber, paid with lasting woes ! 440
A deed so dreadful all the gods alarms,

Vengeance is on the wing, and Heaven in arms !'

" Meantime Lampetie mounts the aerial way,
And kindles into rage the god of day :

" ' Vengeance, ye powers,' he cries, ' and thou
whose hand 445

Aims the red bolt, and hurls the writen brand !
Slain are those herds which I with pride survey,
When through the ports of heaven I pour the day,
Or deep in ocean plunge the burning ray.
Vengeance, ye gods ! or I the skies forego, 450
And bear the lamp of heaven to shades below.'

" To whom the thundering Power : ' Oh source of
day !

Whose radiant lamp adorns the azure way,
Still may thy beams through heaven's bright portals
rise,

The joy of earth, and glory of the skies ; 455
Lo ! my red arm I bare, my thunders guide,
To dash the offenders in the whelming tide.'

" To fair Calypso, from the bright abodes,
Hermes convey'd these counsels of the gods.

" Meantime from man to man my tongue exclaims,
My wrath is kindled, and my soul in flames. 461
In vain ! I view perform'd the direful deed,
Beeves, slain by heaps, along the ocean bleed.

“Now Heaven gave signs of wrath; along the
ground 464

Crept the raw hides, and with a bellowing sound
Roar'd the dead limbs; the burning entrails groan'd.
Six guilty days my wretched mates employ
In impious feasting, and unhallow'd joy;
'The seventh arose, and now the sire of gods
Rein'd the rough storms, and calm'd the tossing
floods : 470

With speed the bark we climb; the spacious sails
Loosed from the yards invite the impelling gales.
Pass'd sight of shore, along the surge we bound,
And all above is sky, and ocean all around;
When lo! a murky cloud the Thunderer forms 475
Full o'er our heads, and blackens heaven with storms.
Night dwells o'er all the deep: and now outflies
The gloomy west, and whistles in the skies.

'The mountain billows roar! the furious blast
Howls o'er the shroud, and rends it from the mast:
The mast gives way, and crackling as it bends, 481
Tears up the deck; then all at once descends:

'The pilot, by the tumbling ruin slain,
Dash'd from the helm, falls headlong in the main.
Then Jove in anger bids his thunders roll, 485

And forky lightnings flash from pole to pole:
Fierce at our heads his deadly bolt he aims,
Red with uncommon wrath, and wrapp'd in flames;
Full on the bark it fell; now high, now low,
'Toss'd and retoss'd, it reel'd beneath the blow; 490
At once into the main the crew it shook:

Sulphureous odours rose, and smouldering smoke.
Like fowl that haunt the floods, they sink, they rise,
Now lost, now seen, with shrieks and dreadful cries;
And strive to gain the bark; but Jove denies. 495
Firm at the helm I stand, when fierce the main
Rush'd with dire noise, and dash'd the sides in
twain;

Again impetuous drove the furious blast,
Snapt the strong helm, and bore to sea the mast.

Firm to the mast with cords the helm I bind, 500
And ride aloft, to Providence resign'd,
Through tumbling billows and a war of wind.

“Now sunk the west, and now a southern breeze,
More dreadful than the tempest, lash'd the seas;
For on the rocks it bore where Scylla raves, 505
And dire Charybdis rolls her thundering waves.

All night I drove; and at the dawn of day,
Fast by the rocks beheld the desperate way:
Just when the sea within her gulf subsides,
And in the roaring whirlpools rush the tides. 510

Swift from the float I vaulted with a bound,
The lofty fig tree seized, and clung around:
So to the beam the bat tenacious clings,
And pendent round it clasps his leathern wings.

High in the air the tree its boughs display'd, 515
And o'er the dungeon cast a dreadful shade;
All unsustain'd between the wave and sky,
Beneath my feet the whirling billows fly.

What time the judge forsakes the noisy bar
To take repast, and stills the wordy war, 520
Charybdis rumbling from her inmost caves,
The mast refunded on her reflux waves.

Swift from the tree, the floating mass to gain,
Sudden I dropp'd amid the flashing main;
Once more undaunted on the ruin rode, 525
And oar'd with labouring arms along the flood.

Unseen I pass'd by Scylla's dire abodes:
(So Jove decreed, dread sire of men and gods :)
Then nine long days I plough'd the calmer seas,
Heaved by the surge, and wafted by the breeze. 530

Weary and wet the Ogygian shores I gain,
When the tenth sun descended to the main.

There, in Calypso's ever-fragrant bowers,
Refresh'd I lay, and joy beguiled the hours.

“My following fates to thee, oh king, are known,
And the bright partner of thy royal throne. 536

Enough: in misery can words avail?

And what so tedious as a twice-told tale?”

BOOK XIII.

ARGUMENT.

The Arrival of Ulysses in Ithaca.

ULYSSES takes his leave of Alcinous and Arete, and embarks in the evening—Next morning the ship arrives at Ithaca; where the sailors, as Ulysses is yet sleeping, lay him on the shore with all his treasures—On their return, Neptune changes their ship into a rock—In the mean time Ulysses awaking, knows not his native Ithaca, by reason of a mist which Pallas had cast around him—He breaks out into loud lamentations; till the goddess, appearing to him in the form of a shepherd, discovers the country to him, and points out the particular places—He then tells a feigned story of his adventures, on which she manifests herself, and they consult together of the measures to be taken to destroy the suitors—To conceal his return, and disguise his person the more effectually, she changes him into the figure of an old beggar.

HE ceased: but left so pleasing on their ear
His voice, that listening still they seem'd to hear.
A pause of silence hush'd the shady rooms:
The greatful conference then the king resumes:
 "Whatever toils the great Ulysses pass'd, 5
Beneath this happy roof they end at last;
No longer now from shore to shore to roam,
Smooth seas and gentle winds invite him home.
But hear me, princes, whom these walls enclose,
For whom my chanter sings, and goblet flows 10
With wine unmix'd; (an honour due to age,
To cheer the grave, and warm the poet's rage;)
Though labour'd gold and many a dazzling vest
Lie heap'd already for our godlike guest;

Without new treasures let him not remove, 15
Large, and expressive of the public love :
Each peer a tripod, each a vase bestow,
A general tribute, which the state shall owe."

This sentence pleased : then all their steps address'd

To separate mansions, and retired to rest. 20

Now did the rosy-finger'd morn arise,
And shed her sacred light along the skies.
Down to the haven and the ships in haste
They bore the treasures, and in safety placed.
The king himself the vases ranged with care ; 25
Then bade his followers to the feast repair.

A victim ox beneath the sacred hand
Of great Alcinous falls, and stains the sand.
To Jove the Eternal (power above all powers !
Who wings the winds, and darkens heaven with
showers) 30

The flames ascend : till evening they prolong
The rites, more sacred made by heavenly song :
For in the midst, with public honours graced,
Thy lyre divine, Demodocus ! was placed.
All, but Ulysses, heard with fix'd delight ; 35

He sat, and eyed the sun, and wish'd the night :
Slow seem'd the sun to move, the hours to roll,
His native home deep imaged in his soul.

As the tired ploughman spent with stubborn toil,
Whose oxen long have torn the furrow'd soil, 40
Sees with delight the sun's declining ray,
When home with feeble knees he bends his way
To late repast, (the day's hard labour done,)

So to Ulysses welcome set the sun ;
Then instant to Alcinous and the rest 45
(The Scherian states) he turn'd, and thus address'd :

" Oh thou, the first in merit and command !
And you the peers and princes of the land !
May every joy be yours ! nor this the least,
When due libation shall have crown'd the feast, 50
Safe to my home to send your happy guest.

Complete are now the bounties you have given,
 Be all those bounties but confirm'd by Heaven !
 So may I find, when all my wanderings cease,
 My consort blameless, and my friends in peace.
 On you be every bliss ; and every day, 56
 In home-felt joys, delighted roll away :
 Yourselves, your wives, your long-descended race,
 May every god enrich with every grace !
 Sure fix'd on virtue may your nation stand, 60
 And public evil never touch the land !”

His words well weighed, the general voice approved

Benign, and instant his dismissal moved.
 The monarch to Pontonous gave the sign,
 To fill the goblet high with rosy wine : 65
 “ Great Jove the Father first,” he cried, “ implore ;
 Then send the stranger to his native shore.”

The luscious wine the obedient herald brought :
 Around the mansion flowed the purple draught :
 Each from his seat to each immortal pours, 70
 Whom glory circles in the Olympian bowers.
 Ulysses sole with air majestic stands,
 The bowl presenting to Arete's hands ;
 Then thus : “ Oh queen, farewell ! be still possess'd
 Of dear remembrance, blessing still and bless'd ! 75
 Till age and death shall gently call thee hence,
 (Sure fate of every mortal excellence !)
 Farewell ! and joys successive ever spring
 To thee, to thine, the people, and the king !”

Thus he : then parting prints the sandy shore 80
 To the fair port : a herald march'd before,
 Sent by Alcinous ; of Arete's train
 Three chosen maids attend him to the main :
 This does a tunic and white vest convey,
 A various casket that of rich inlay, 85
 And bread and wine the third. The cheerful mates
 Safe in the hollow poop dispose the cates :
 Upon the deck soft painted robes they spread,
 With linen cover'd, for the hero's bed.

He climb'd the lofty stern ; then gently press'd 90
The swelling couch, and lay composed to rest.

Now placed in order, the Phæacian train
Their cables loose, and launch into the main :
At once they bend, and strike their equal oars,
And leave the sinking hills and lessening shores. 95
While on the deck the chief in silence lies,
And pleasing slumbers steal upon his eyes.
As fiery coursers in the rapid race
Urged by fierce drivers through the dusty space,
Toss their high heads, and scour along the plain : 100
So mounts the bounding vessel o'er the main.
Back to the stern the parted billows flow,
And the black ocean foams and roars below.

Thus with spread sails the winged galley flies ;
Less swift an eagle cuts the liquid skies ; 105
Divine Ulysses was her sacred load,
A man in wisdom equal to a god !
Much danger, long and mighty toils he bore,
In storms by sea, and combats on the shore :
All which soft sleep now banish'd from his breast, 110
Wrapp'd in a pleasing, deep, and deathlike rest.

But when the morning star with early ray
Flamed in the front of heaven, and promised day,
Like distant clouds the mariner describes
Fair Ithaca's emerging hills arise. 115
Far from the town a spacious port appears,
Sacred to Phorcys' power, whose name it bears :
Two craggy rocks projecting to the main,
The roaring wind's tempestuous rage restrain ;
Within the waves in softer murmurs glide, 120
And ships secure without their halsers ride.
High at a head a branching olive grows,
And crowns the pointed cliffs with shady boughs.
Beneath, a gloomy grotto's cool recess
Delights the Nereids of the neighbouring seas, 125
Where bowls and urns were form'd of living stone,
And massy beams in native marble shone ;

On which the labours of the nymphs were roll'd,
Their webs divine of purple mix'd with gold.
Within the cave the clustering bees attend 130
Their waxen works, or from the roof depend.
Perpetual waters o'er the pavement glide ;
Two marble doors unfold on either side ;
Sacred the south, by which the gods descend ;
But mortals enter at the northern end. 135

Thither they bent, and haul'd their ship to land ;
(The crooked keel divides the yellow sand ;)
Ulysses sleeping on his couch they bore,
And gently placed him on the rocky shore.
His treasures next, Alcinous' gifts, they laid 140
In the wild olive's unfrequented shade,
Secure from theft ; then launch'd the bark again,
Resumed their oars, and measured back the main.
Nor yet forgot old ocean's dread supreme
The vengeance vow'd for eyeless Polypheme. 145
Before the throne of mighty Jove he stood,
And sought the secret counsels of the god.

" Shall then no more, oh sire of gods ! be mine
The rights and honours of a power divine ?
Scorn'd ev'n by man, and (oh severe disgrace !) 150
By soft Phæacians, my degenerate race !
Against yon destined head in vain I swore,
And menaced vengeance ere he reach'd his shore ;
To reach his natal shore was thy decree ;
Mild I obey'd, for who shall war with thee ? 155
Behold him landed, careless and asleep,
From all the eluded dangers of the deep ;
Lo where he lies, amid a shining store
Of brass, rich garments, and refulgent ore ;
And bears triumphant to his native isle 160
A prize more worth than Ilion's noble spoil."

To whom the father of the immortal powers,
Who swells the clouds, and gladdens earth with
showers :

" Can mighty Neptune thus of man complain ?
Neptune, tremendous o'er the boundless main ! 165

Revered and awful ev'n in heaven's abodes,
 Ancient and great! a god above the gods!
 If that low race offend thy power divine,
 (Weak, daring creatures!) is not vengeance thine?
 Go then, the guilty at thy will chastise." 170
 He said. The shaker of the earth replies:

"This then I doom: to fix the gallant ship
 A mark of vengeance on the sable deep;
 To warn the thoughtless self-confiding train,
 No more unlicensed thus to brave the main. 175
 Full in their port a shady hill shall rise,
 If such thy will." "We will it," Jove replies.
 "Ev'n when with transport blackening all the strand,
 The swarming people hail their ship to land,
 Fix her for ever, a memorial stone: 180
 Still let her seem to sail, and seem alone.
 The trembling crowds shall see the sudden shade
 Of whelming mountains overhang their head!"

With that the god whose earthquakes rock the
 ground
 Fierce to Phæacia cross'd the vast profound. 185
 Swift as a swallow sweeps the liquid way,
 The winged pinnace shot along the sea.
 The god arrests her with a sudden stroke,
 And roots her down an everlasting rock.
 Aghast the Scherians stand in deep surprise; 190
 All press to speak, all question with their eyes.
 What hands unseen the rapid bark restrain!
 And yet it swims, or seems to swim, the main!
 Thus they, unconscious of the deed divine:
 Till great Alcinous rising own'd the sign: 195

"Behold the long-predestined day!" he cries;
 'Oh certain faith of ancient prophecies!
 These ears have heard my royal sire disclose
 A dreadful story, big with future woes;
 How moved with wrath, that careless we convey
 Promiscuous every guest to every bay, 201
 Stern Neptune raged; and how by his command
 Firm rooted in the surge a ship should stand;

(A monument of wrath ;) and mound on mound 204
Should hide our walls, or whelm beneath the ground."

"The fates have follow'd as declared the seer.
Be humbled, nations ! and your monarch hear.
No more unlicensed brave the deeps, no more
With every stranger pass from shore to shore :
On angry Neptune now for mercy call ; 210
To his high name let twelve black oxen fall.
So may the god reverse his purposed will,
Nor o'er our city hang the dreadful hill."

The monarch spoke : they trembled and obey'd,
Forth on the sands the victim oxen led : 215
The gather'd tribes before the altars stand,
And chiefs and rulers, a majestic band.
The king of ocean all the tribes implore ;
The blazing altars redden all the shore.

Meanwhile Ulysses in his country lay, 220
Released from sleep, and round him might survey
The solitary shore and rolling sea.
Yet had his mind through tedious absence lost
The dear resemblance of his native coast ;
Besides, Minerva, to secure her care, 225
Diffused around a veil of thicken'd air :
For so the gods ordain'd, to keep unseen
His royal person from his friends and queen ;
Till the proud suitors for their crimes afford
An ample vengeance to their injured lord. 230

Now all the land another prospect bore,
Another port appear'd, another shore,
And long-continued ways, and winding floods,
And unknown mountains, crown'd with unknown
woods.

Pensive and slow, with sudden grief oppress'd, 235
The king arose, and beat his careful breast,
Cast a long look o'er all the coast and main,
And sought, around, his native realm in vain :
Then with erected eyes stood fix'd in wo,
And as he spoke, the tears began to flow. 240

“Ye gods,” he cried, “upon what barren coast,
In what new region, is Ulysses toss’d ?
Possess’d by wild barbarians, fierce in arms ?
Or men whose bosom tender pity warms ?
Where shall this treasure now in safety lie ? 245
And whither, whither its sad owner fly ?
Ah why did I Alcinous’ grace implore ?
Ah why forsake Phæacia’s happy shore ?
Some juster prince perhaps had entertain’d,
And safe restored me to my native land. 250
Is this the promised, long-expected coast,
And this the faith Phæacia’s rulers boast ?
Oh righteous gods ! of all the great, how few
Are just to Heaven, and to their promise true !
But he, the power to whose all-seeing eyes 255
The deeds of men appear without disguise,
’Tis his alone to avenge the wrongs I bear :
For still the oppress’d are his peculiar care.
To count these presents, and from thence to prove
Their faith is mine : the rest belongs to Jove.” 260
Then on the sands he ranged his wealthy store,
The gold, the vests, the tripods number’d o’er :
All these he found, but still in error lost,
Disconsolate he wanders on the coast,
Sighs for his country, and laments again 265
To the deaf rocks, and hoarse resounding main.
When, lo ! the guardian goddess of the wise,
Celestial Pallas, stood before his eyes ;
In-show a youthful swain, of form divine,
Who seem’d descended from some princely line.
A graceful robe her slender body dress’d ; 271
Around her shoulders flew the waving vest,
Her decent hand a shining javelin bore,
And painted sandals on her feet she wore.
To whom the king : “ Whoe’er of human race 275
Thou art, that wander’st in this desert place !
With joy to thee, as to some god, I bend,
To thee my treasures and myself commend.

Oh tell a wretch in exile doom'd to stray,
What air I breathe, what country I survey? 280
The fruitful continent's extremest bound,
Or some fair isle which Neptune's arms surround?"

"From what far clime," said she, "remote from
fame

Arrivest thou here, a stranger to our name?
Thou seest an island, not to those unknown 285
Whose hills are brighten'd by the rising sun,
Nor those that placed beneath his utmost reign
Behold him sinking in the western main.
The rugged soil allows no level space
For flying chariots, or the rapid race; 290
Yet, not ungrateful to the peasant's pain,
Suffices fulness to the swelling grain:
The loaded trees their various fruits produc ,
And clustering grapes afford a generous juice: 294
Woods crown our mountains, and in every grove
The bounding goats and frisking heifers rove:
Soft rains and kindly dews refresh the field,
And rising springs eternal verdure yield.
Ev'n to those shores is Ithaca renown'd, 299
Where Troy's majestic ruins strew the ground."

At this the chief with transport was possess'd,
His panting heart exulted in his breast:
Yet, well dissembling his untimely joys,
And veiling truth in plausible disguise,
Thus, with an air sincere, in fiction bold, 305
His ready tale the inventive hero told.

"Oft have I heard in Crete this island's name;
For 'twas from Crete, my native soil, I came,
Self-banish'd thence. I sail'd before the wind,
And left my children and my friends behind. 310
From fierce Idomeneus' revenge I flew,
Whose son, the swift Orsilochus, I slew,
With brutal force he seized my Trojan prey,
Due to the toils of many a bloody day.
Unseen I 'scaped, and favour'd by the night, 315
In a Phœnician vessel took my flight,

For Pyle or Elis bound : but tempests toss'd
 And raging billows drove us on your coast.
 In dead of night an unknown port we gain'd,
 Spent with fatigue, and slept secure on land. 320
 But ere the rosy morn renew'd the day,
 While in the embrace of pleasing sleep I lay,
 Sudden, invited by auspicious gales,
 They land my goods, and hoist their flying sails.
 Abandon'd here, my fortune I deplore, 325
 A hapless exile on a foreign shore."

Thus while he spoke, the blue-eyed maid began
 With pleasing smiles to view the godlike man :
 Then changed her form : and now, divinely bright,
 Jove's heavenly daughter stood confess'd to sight ;
 Like a fair virgin in her beauty's bloom, 331
 Skill'd in the illustrious labours of the loom.

"Oh still the same Ulysses !" she rejoin'd,
 "In useful craft successfully refined !
 Artful in speech, in action, and in mind ! 335
 Sufficed it not, that, thy long labours pass'd,
 Secure thou seest thy native shore at last ?
 But this to me ? who, like thyself, excel
 In arts of counsel, and dissembling well ;
 To me ? whose wit exceeds the powers divine, 340
 No less than mortals are surpass'd by thine.
 Know'st thou not me ? who made thy life my care,
 Through ten years' wandering, and through ten
 years' war ;

Who taught thee arts, Alcinous to persuade,
 To raise his wonder, and engage his aid ; 345
 And now appear, thy treasures to protect,
 Conceal thy person, thy designs direct,
 And tell what more thou must from fate expect.
 Domestic woes far heavier to be borne !
 The pride of fools, and slaves' insulting scorn. 350
 But thou be silent, nor reveal thy state,
 Yield to the force of unresisted fate,
 And bear unmoved the wrongs of base mankind,
 The last, and hardest, conquest of the mind."

“ Goddess of wisdom !” Ithacus replies, 355
 “ He who discerns thee must be truly wise,
 So seldom view’d, and ever in disguise !
 When the bold Argives led their warring powers
 Against proud Ilion’s well-defended towers,
 Ulysses was thy care, celestial maid ! 360
 Graced with thy sight, and favour’d with thy aid.
 But when the Trojan piles in ashes lay,
 And bound for Greece we plough’d the watery way,
 Our fleet dispersed and driven from coast to coast,
 Thy sacred presence from that hour I lost ; 365
 Till I beheld thy radiant form once more,
 And heard thy counsels on Phæacia’s shore.
 But, by the almighty Author of thy race,
 Tell me, oh tell, is this my native place ?
 For much I fear, long tracts of land and sea 370
 Divide this coast from distant Ithaca ;
 The sweet delusion kindly you impose,
 To sooth my hopes, and mitigate my woes.”

Thus he. ‘The blue-eyed goddess thus replies :
 “ How prone to doubt, how cautious are the wise !
 Who, versed in fortune, fear the flattering show, 376
 And taste not half the bliss the gods bestow.
 The more shall Pallas aid thy just desires,
 And guard the wisdom which herself inspires.
 Others, long absent from their native place, 380
 Straight seek their home, and fly with eager pace
 To their wives’ arms, and children’s dear embrace.
 Not thus Ulysses : he decrees to prove
 His subjects’ faith and queen’s suspected love : 384
 Who mourn’d her lord twice ten revolving years,
 And wastes the days in grief, the nights in tears.
 But Pallas knew, thy friends and navy lost,
 Once more ’twas given thee to behold thy coast :
 Yet how could I with adverse fate engage,
 And mighty Neptune’s unrelenting rage ? 390
 Now lift thy longing eyes, while I restore
 The pleasing prospect of thy native shore.

Behold the port of Phorcys ! fenced around
With rocky mountains, and with olives crown'd.
Behold the gloomy grot ! whose cool recess 395
Delights the Nereids of the neighbouring seas :
Whose now neglected altars in thy reign
Blush'd with the blood of sheep and oxen slain.
Behold ! where Neritus the clouds divides,
And shakes the waving forests on his sides." 400

So spake the goddess ; and the prospect clear'd,
The mists dispersed, and all the coast appear'd.
The king with joy confess'd his place of birth,
And on his knees salutes his mother earth :
Then, with his suppliant hands upheld in air, 405
Thus to the sea-green sisters sends his prayer :

" All hail ! ye virgin daughters of the main !
Ye streams, beyond my hopes beheld again !
To you once more your own Ulysses bows ;
Attend his transports, and receive his vows ! 410
If Jove prolong my days, and Pallas crown
The growing virtues of my youthful son,
To you shall rites divine be ever paid,
And grateful offerings on your altars laid." 414

Thus then Minerva : " From that anxious breast
Dismiss those cares, and leave to Heaven the rest.
Our task be now thy treasured stores to save,
Deep in the close recesses of the cave :
Then future means consult." She spoke, and trod
The shady grot, that brighten'd with the god. 420
The closest caverns of the grot she sought ;
The gold, the brass, the robes, Ulysses brought ;
These in the secret gloom the chief disposed ;
The entrance with a rock the goddess closed.

Now, seated in the olive's sacred shade, 425
Confer the hero and the martial maid.
The goddess of the azure eyes began :
" Son of Laertes much-experienced man !
The suitor train thy early care demand,
Of that luxurious race to rid the land : 430

Three years thy house their lawless rule has seen,
 And proud addresses to the matchless queen.
 But she thy absence mourns from day to day,
 And inly bleeds, and silent wastes away :
 Elusive of the bridal hour, she gives 435
 Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives."

To this Ulysses : " Oh celestial maid !
 Praised be thy counsel, and thy timely aid :
 Else had I seen my native walls in vain,
 Like great Atrides, just restored and slain. 440
 Vouchsafe the means of vengeance to debate,
 And plan with all thy arts the scene of fate.
 Then, then be present, and my soul inspire,
 As when we wrapp'd Troy's heaven-built walls in
 fire.

Though leagued against me hundred heroes stand,
 Hundreds shall fall, if Pallas aid my hand." 446

She answered : " In the dreadful day of fight,
 Know, I am with thee, strong in all my might.
 If thou but equal to thyself be found,
 What gasping numbers then shall press the ground !
 What human victims stain the feastful floor ! 451
 How wide the pavements float with guilty gore !
 It fits thee now to wear a dark disguise,
 And secret walk unknown to mortal eyes.
 For this my hand shall wither every grace, 455
 And every elegance of form and face,
 O'er thy smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread,
 Turn hoar the auburn honours of thy head :
 Disfigure every limb with coarse attire,
 And in thy eyes extinguish all the fire ; 460
 Add all the wants and the decays of life ;
 Estrange thee from thy own—thy son, thy wife :
 From the loathed object every sight shall turn,
 And the blind suitors their destruction scorn.

" Go first the master of thy herds to find, 465
 True to his charge, a loyal swain and kind :
 For thee he sighs ; and to the royal heir
 And chaste Penelope extends his care.

At the Coracian rock he now resides,
 Where Arethusa's sable water glides ; 470
 The sable water and the copious mast
 Swell the fat herd ; luxuriant, large repast !
 With him rest peaceful in the rural cell,
 And all you ask his faithful tongue shall tell.

Me into other realms my cares convey, 475
 To Sparta, still with female beauty gay :
 For know to Sparta thy loved offspring came,
 To learn thy fortunes from the voice of Fame."

At this the father, with a father's care :
 " Must he too suffer ? he, oh goddess ! bear 480
 Of wanderings and of woes a wretched share ?
 Through the wild ocean plough the dangerous way,
 And leave his fortunes and his house a prey ?
 Why wouldst not thou, oh all-enlightened mind !
 Inform him certain, and protect him, kind ?" 485

To whom Minerva : " Be thy soul at rest ;
 And know, whatever Heaven ordains is best.
 To fame I sent him, to acquire renown ;
 To other regions is his virtue known :
 Secure he sits, near great Atrides placed ; 490
 With friendships strengthen'd, and with honours
 graced.

But lo ! an ambush waits his passage o'er ;
 Fierce foes insidious intercept the shore :
 In vain ; far sooner all the murderous brood
 This injured land shall fatten with their blood." 495

She spake, then touch'd him with her powerful
 wand ;

The skin shrunk up, and wither'd at her hand.
 A swift old age o'er all his members spread ;
 A sudden frost was sprinkled on his head ;
 Nor longer in the heavy eyeball shined • 500
 The glance divine, forth-beaming from the mind.
 His robe, which spots indelible besmear,
 In rags dishonest flutters with the air :
 A stag's torn hide is lapp'd around his reins,
 A rugged staff his trembling hand sustains ; 505

And at his side a wretched scrip was hung,
Wide patch'd and knotted to a twisted thong.
So look'd the chief, so moved ; to mortal eyes
Object uncouth ! a man of miseries !
While Pallas, cleaving the wide fields of air, 510
To Sparta flies, Telemachus her care.

BOOK XIV.

ARGUMENT.

The Conversation with Eumæus.

ULYSSES arrives in disguise at the house of Eumæus, where he is received, entertained, and lodged with the utmost hospitality—The several discourses of that faithful old servant, with the feigned story told by Ulysses to conceal himself, and other conversations on various subjects, take up this entire book.

BUT he, deep-musing, o'er the mountains stray'd
Through mazy thickets of the woodland shade,
And cavern'd ways, the shaggy coast along,
With cliffs and nodding forests overhung.
Eumæus at his sylvan lodge he sought, 5
A faithful servant, and without a fault.
Ulysses found him busied, as he sat
Before the threshold of his rustic gate ;
Around, the mansion in a circle shone ;
A rural portico of rugged stone : 10
(In absence of his lord, with honest toil
His own industrious hands had raised the pile.)
The wall was stone from neighbouring quarries
borne,
Encircled with a fence of native thorn,
And strong with pales, by many a weary stroke 15
Of stubborn labour hewn from heart of oak ;
Frequent and thick. Within the space were rear'd
Twelve ample cells, the lodgments of his herd.
Full fifty pregnant females each contain'd ;
The males without (a smaller race) remain'd ; 20

Doom'd to supply the suitors' wasteful feast,
 A stock by daily luxury decreased ;
 Now scarce four hundred left. These to defend,
 Four savage dogs, a watchful guard, attend.
 Here sat Eumæus, and his cares applied 25
 To form strong buskins of well-season'd hide.
 Of four assistants who his labour share,
 Three now were absent on the rural care ;
 The fourth drove victims to the suitor train :
 But he, of ancient faith, a simple swain, 30
 Sigh'd, while he furnish'd the luxurious board,
 And wearied Heaven with wishes for his lord.

Soon as Ulysses near the enclosure drew,
 With open mouths the furious mastiffs flew :
 Down sat the sage, and cautious to withstand, 35
 Let fall the offensive truncheon from his hand.
 Sudden, the master runs ; aloud he calls ;
 And from his hasty hand the leather falls ;
 With showers of stones he drives them far away ;
 The scattering dogs around at distance bay. 40

“ Unhappy stranger !” thus the faithful swain
 Began with accent gracious and humane,
 “ What sorrow had been mine, if at my gate
 Thy reverend age had met a shameful fate !
 Enough of woes already have I known ; 45
 Enough my master's sorrows and my own.
 While here (ungrateful task !) his herds I feed,
 Ordain'd for lawless rioters to bleed ;
 Perhaps, supported at another's board,
 Far from his country roams my hapless lord ! 50
 Or sigh'd in exile forth his latest breath,
 Now cover'd with the eternal shade of death !

“ But enter this my homely roof, and see,
 Our woods not void of hospitality.
 Then tell me whence thou art, and what the share 55
 Of woes and wanderings thou wert born to bear !”

He said, and, seconding the kind request,
 With friendly step precedes his unknown guest.

A shaggy goat's soft hide beneath him spread,
And with fresh rushes heap'd an ample bed : 60
Joy touch'd the hero's tender soul to find
So just reception from a heart so kind ;
" And, oh ye gods ! with all your blessings grace,"
He thus broke forth, " this friend of human race !"

The swain replied : " It never was our guise 65
To slight the poor, or aught humane despise ;
For Jove unfolds our hospitable door,
'Tis Jove that sends the stranger and the poor.
Little, alas ! is all the good I can ;
A man oppress'd, dependant, yet a man : 70
Accept such treatment as a swain affords,
Slave to the insolence of youthful lords !
Far hence is by unequal gods removed
That man of bounties, loving and beloved !
To whom whate'er his slave enjoys is owed, 75
And more, had fate allow'd, had been bestow'd :
But fate condemn'd him to a foreign shore ;
Much have I sorrow'd, but my master more.
Now cold he lies, to death's embrace resign'd :
Ah, perish Helen ! perish all her kind ! 80
For whose cursed cause, in Agamemnon's name,
He trod so fatally the paths of fame."

His vest succinct then girding round his waist,
Forth rush'd the swain with hospitable haste.
Straight to the lodgments of his herd he run, 85
Where the fat porkers slept beneath the sun ;
Of two, his cutlass launch'd the spouting blood ;
These quarter'd, singed, and fix'd on forks of wood,
All hasty on the hissing coals he threw ;
And, smoking, back the tasteful viands drew, 90
Broachers and all ; then on the board display'd
The ready meal, before Ulysses laid
With flour imbrown'd ; next mingled wine yet new,
And luscious as the bees' nectareous dew :
Then sat companion of the friendly feast, 95
With open look ; and thus bespoke his guest :

“ Take with free welcome what our hands prepare,
 Such food as falls to simple servants’ share ;
 The best our lords consume ; those thoughtless
 peers,
 Rich without bounty, guilty without fears. 100
 Yet sure the gods their impious acts detest,
 And honour justice and the righteous breast.
 Pirates and conquerors of harden’d mind,
 The foes of peace, and scourges of mankind,
 To whom offending men are made a prey 105
 When Jove in vengeance gives a land away ;
 Ev’n these, when of their ill-got spoils possess’d,
 Find sure tormentors in the guilty breast ;
 Some voice of God close whispering from within,
 ‘ Wretch ! this is villany, and this is sin.’ 110
 But these, no doubt, some oracle explore,
 That tells, the great Ulysses is no more.
 Hence springs their confidence, and from our sighs
 Their rapine strengthens, and their riots rise :
 Constant as Jove the night and day bestows, 115
 Bleeds a whole hecatomb, a vintage flows.
 None match’d this hero’s wealth, of all who reign
 O’er the fair islands of the neighbouring main.
 Nor all the monarchs whose far-dreaded sway
 The wide-extended continents obey : 120
 First, on the main land, of Ulysses’ breed
 Twelve herds, twelve flocks, on ocean’s margin feed ;
 As many stalls for shaggy goats are rear’d ;
 As many lodgments for the tusky herd ; 124
 Those foreign keepers guard : and here are seen
 Twelve herds of goats that graze our utmost green ;
 To native pastors is their charge assign’d,
 And mine the care to feed the bristly kind :
 Each day the fattest bleeds of either herd,
 All to the suitors’ wasteful board preferr’d.” 130
 Thus he, benevolent : his unknown guest
 With hunger keen devours the savoury feast ;
 While schemes of vengeance ripen in his breast.

Silent and thoughtful while the board he eyed,
Eumæus pours on high the purple tide ; 135
The king with smiling looks his joy express'd,
And thus the kind inviting host address'd :

“ Say now, what man is he, the man deplored,
So rich, so potent, whom you style your lord ? 139
Late with such affluence and possessions bless'd,
And now in honour's glorious bed at rest.

Whoever was the warrior, he must be
To Fame no stranger, nor perhaps to me ;
Who (so the gods and so the fates ordain'd)
Have wander'd many a sea, and many a land.” 145

“ Small is the faith the prince and queen ascribe,”
Replied Eumæus, “ to the wandering tribe.

For needy strangers still to flattery fly,
And want too oft betrays the tongue to lie.
Each vagrant traveller, that touches here, 150
Deludes with fallacies the royal ear,

To dear remembrance makes his image rise,
And calls the springing sorrows from her eyes.
Such thou mayst be. But he whose name you crave
Moulders in earth, or welters on the wave, 155

Or food for fish or dogs his relics lie,
Or torn by birds are scattered through the sky.
So perish'd he ; and left (for ever lost)
Much wo to all, but sure to me the most.

So mild a master never shall I find ; 160
Less dear the parents whom I left behind,
Less soft my mother, less my father kind.

Not with such transport would my eyes run o'er,
Again to hail them in their native shore,
As loved Ulysses once more to embrace, 165
Restored and breathing in his natal place.

That name, for ever dread, yet ever dear,
Ev'n in his absence I pronounce with fear :
In my respect he bears a prince's part ;
But lives a very brother in my heart.” 170

Thus spoke the faithful swain, and thus rejoined
The master of his grief, the man of patient mind :

“Ulysses, friend ! shall view his old abodes,
(Distrustful as thou art,) nor doubt the gods.
Nor speak I rashly, but with faith averr’d, 175
And what I speak attesting Heaven has heard.
If so, a cloak and vesture be my meed ;
Till his return, no title shall I plead,
Though certain be my news, and great my need.
Whom want itself can force untruths to tell, 180
My soul detests him as the gates of hell.

“Thou first be witness, hospitable Jove !
And every god inspiring social love !
And witness every household power that waits
Guard of these fires, and angel of these gates ! 185
Ere the next moon increase, or this decay,
His ancient realms Ulysses shall survey,
In blood and dust each proud oppressor mourn,
And the lost glories of his house return.”

“Nor shall that meed be thine, nor ever more
Shall loved Ulysses hail this happy shore,” 191
Replied Eumæus : “to the present hour
Now turn thy thought, and joys within our power.
From sad reflection let my soul repose ;
The name of him awakes a thousand woes. 195
But guard him, gods ! and to these arms restore !
Not his true consort can desire him more ;
Not old Laertes, broken with despair ;
Not young Telemachus, his blooming heir.
Alas, Telemachus ! my sorrows flow 200
Afresh for thee, my second cause of wo !
Like some fair plant set by a heavenly hand,
He grew, he flourish’d, and he bless’d the land ;
In all the youth his father’s image shined,
Bright in his person, brighter in his mind. 205
What man, or god, deceived his better sense,
Far on the swelling seas to wander hence ?
To distant Pylos hapless is he gone,
To seek his father’s fate, and find his own !
For traitors wait his way, with dire design 210
To end at once the great Arcesian line.

But let us leave him to their wills above ;
The fates of men are in the hand of Jove.
And now, my venerable guest ! declare
Your name, your parents, and your native air : 215
Sincere from whence begun your course relate,
And to what ship I owe the friendly freight."

Thus he : and thus, with prompt invention bold,
The cautious chief his ready story told :

" On dark reserve what better can prevail, 220
Or from the fluent tongue produce the tale,
Than when two friends, alone, in peaceful place
Confer, and wines and cates the table grace ;
But most, the kind inviter's cheerful face ?
Thus might we sit, with social goblets crown'd, 225
Till the whole circle of the year goes round ;
Not the whole circle of the year would close
My long narration of a life of woes.

But such was Heaven's high will ! Know then, I
came

From sacred Crete, and from a sire of fame : 230

Castor Hylacides, (that name he bore,)

Beloved and honour'd in his native shore ;

Bless'd in his riches, in his children more.

Sprung of a handmaid, from a bought embrace,

I shared his kindness with his lawful race : 235

But when that fate, which all must undergo,

From earth removed him to the shades below,

The large domain his greedy sons divide,

And each was portion'd as the lots decide.

Little, alas ! was left my wretched share, 240

Except a house, a covert from the air :

But what by niggard Fortune was denied,

A willing widow's copious wealth supplied.

My valour was my plea, a gallant mind

That, true to honour, never lagg'd behind : 245

(The sex is ever to a soldier kind.)

Now wasting years my former strength confound,

And added woes have bow'd me to the ground ;

Yet by the stubble you may guess the grain,
 And mark the ruins of no vulgar man. 250
 Me, Pallas gave to lead the martial storm,
 And the fair ranks of battle to deform;
 Me, Mars inspired to turn the foe to flight,
 And tempt the secret ambush of the night.
 Let ghastly Death in all his forms appear, 255
 I saw him not, it was not mine to fear.
 Before the rest I raised my ready steel;
 The first I met, he yielded, or he fell.
 But works of peace my soul disdain'd to bear,
 The rural labour, or domestic care. 260
 To raise the mast, the missile dart to wing,
 And send swift arrows from the bounding string,
 Were arts the gods made grateful to my mind;
 Those gods, who turn (to various ends design'd)
 The various thoughts and talents of mankind. 265
 Before the Grecians touch'd the Trojan plain,
 Nine times commander or by land or main,
 In foreign fields I spread my glory far,
 Great in the praise, rich in the spoils of war:
 Thence charged with riches, as increased in fame,
 To Crete return'd, an honourable name. 271
 But when great Jove that direful war decreed,
 Which roused all Greece, and made the mighty bleed;
 Our states myself and Idomen employ
 To lead their fleets, and carry death to Troy. 275
 Nine years we warr'd; the tenth saw Ilion fall;
 Homeward we sail'd, but Heaven dispersed us all.
 One only month my wife enjoy'd my stay;
 So will'd the god who gives and takes away.
 Nine ships I mann'd, equipp'd with ready stores, 280
 Intent to voyage to the Egyptian shores;
 In feast and sacrifice my chosen train
 Six days consumed; the seventh we plough'd the
 main.
 Crete's ample fields diminish to our eye;
 Before the Boreal blast the vessels fly; 285

Safe through the level seas we sweep our way;
 The steersman governs, and the ships obey.
 The fifth fair morn we stem the Egyptian tide,
 And tilting o'er the bay the vessels ride :
 To anchor there my fellows I command, 290
 And spies commission to explore the land.
 But sway'd by lust of gain, and headlong will,
 The coasts they ravage, and the natives kill.
 The spreading clamour to their city flies,
 And horse and foot in mingled tumult rise. 295
 The reddening dawn reveals the circling fields,
 Horrid with bristly spears, and glancing shields.
 Jove thunder'd on their side. Our guilty head
 We turn'd to flight; the gathering vengeance spread
 On all parts round, and heaps on heaps lie dead. 300
 I then explored my thought, what course to prove :
 (And sure the thought was dictated by Jove :)
 Oh, had he left me to that happier doom,
 And saved a life of miseries to come !
 The radiant helmet from my brows unlaced, 305
 And low on earth my shield and javelin cast,
 I meet the monarch with a suppliant's face,
 Approach his chariot, and his knees embrace.
 He heard, he saved, he placed me at his side ;
 My state he pitied, and my tears he dried, 310
 Restrain'd the rage the vengeful foe express'd,
 And turn'd the deadly weapons from my breast.
 Pious ! to guard the hospitable rite,
 And fearing Jove, whom mercy's works delight.
 " In Egypt thus with peace and plenty bless'd, 315
 I lived (and happy still had lived) a guest.
 On seven bright years successive blessings wait;
 The next changed all the colour of my fate.
 A false Phœnician, of insidious mind,
 Versed in vile arts, and foe to human kind, 320
 With semblance fair invites me to his home ;
 I seized the proffer : (ever fond to roam :)
 Domestic in his faithless roof I staid,
 Till the swift sun his annual circle made.

To Libya then he meditates the way ; 325
 With guileful art a stranger to betray,
 And sell to bondage in a foreign land :
 Much doubting, yet compell'd, I quit the strand.
 Through the mid seas the nimble pinnace sails,
 Aloof from Crete, before the northern gales : 330
 But when remote her chalky cliffs we lost,
 And far from ken of any other coast,
 When all was wild expanse of sea and air,
 Then doom'd high Jove due vengeance to prepare.
 He hung a night of horrors o'er their head ; 335
 (The shaded ocean blacken'd as it spread ;)
 He launch'd the fiery bolt ; from pole to pole
 Broad burst the lightnings, deep the thunders roll ;
 In giddy rounds the whirling ship is toss'd,
 And all in clouds of smothering sulphur lost. 340
 As from a hanging rock's tremendous height,
 The sable crows with intercepted flight
 Drop endlong ; scarred, and black with sulphurous
 hue,
 So from the deck are hurl'd the ghastly crew.
 Such end the wicked found ! but Jove's intent 345
 Was yet to save the oppress'd and innocent.
 Placed on the mast, (the last resource of life,)
 With winds and waves I held unequal strife ;
 For nine long days the billows tilting o'er,
 The tenth soft wafts me to Thesprotia's shore. 350
 The monarch's son a shipwreck'd wretch relieved,
 The sire with hospitable rites received,
 And in his palace like a brother placed,
 With gifts of price and gorgeous garments graced.
 While here I sojourn'd, oft I heard the fame 355
 How late Ulysses to the country came,
 How loved, how honour'd, in this court he staid,
 And here his whole collected treasure laid ;
 I saw myself the vast unnumber'd store
 Of steel elaborate, and refulgent ore, 360
 And brass high heap'd amid the regal dome ;
 Immense supplies for ages yet to come !

Meantime he voyaged to explore the will
Of Jove, on high Dodona's holy hill,
What means might best his safe return avail ; 365
To come in pomp, or bear a secret sail.
Full oft has Phidon, while he pour'd the wine,
Attesting solemn all the powers divine,
That soon Ulysses would return, declared,
The sailors waiting, and the ships prepared. 370
But first the king dismiss'd me from his shores,
For fair Dulichium crown'd with fruitful stores ;
To good Acastus' friendly care consigned :
But other counsels pleased the sailors' mind :
New frauds were plotted by the faithless train, 375
And misery demands me once again.
Soon as remote from shore they plough the wave,
With ready hands they rush to seize their slave ;
Then with these tatter'd rags they wrapp'd me round,
(Stripp'd of my own.) and to the vessel bound. 380
At eve, at Ithaca's delightful land
The ship arrived : forth issuing on the sand,
They sought repast ; while to the unhappy kind,
The pitying gods themselves my chains unbind.
Soft I descended, to the sea applied 385
My naked breast, and shot along the tide.
Soon pass'd beyond their sight, I left the flood,
And took the spreading shelter of the wood.
Their prize escaped the faithless pirates mourn'd ;
But deem'd inquiry vain, and to their ship return'd.
Screen'd by protecting gods from hostile eyes, 391
They led me to a good man and a wise,
To live beneath thy hospitable care,
And wait the woes Heaven dooms me yet to bear."
" Unhappy guest ! whose sorrows touch my mind !"
Thus good Eumæus with a sigh rejoin'd ; 396
" For real sufferings since I grieve sincere,
Check not with fallacies the springing tear ;
Nor turn the passion into groundless joy
For him, whom Heaven has destined to destroy.

Oh ! had he perish'd on some well-fought day, 401
 Or in his friends' embraces died away !
 That grateful Greece with streaming eyes might
 raise
 Historic marbles to record his praise ;
 His praise, eternal on the faithful stone, 405
 Had with transmissive honours graced his son.
 Now, snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,
 Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost !
 While pensive in his solitary den,
 Far from gay cities and the ways of men, 410
 I linger life ; nor to the court repair,
 But when the constant queen commands my care ;
 Or when, to taste her hospitable board,
 Some guest arrives with rumours of her lord ; 414
 And these indulge their want, and those their wo,
 And here the tears, and there the goblets flow.
 By many such have I been warn'd ; but chief
 By one Ætolian robb'd of all belief,
 Whose hap it was to this our roof to roam,
 For murder banish'd from his native home. 420
 He swore, Ulysses on the coast of Crete
 Staid but a season to refit his fleet ;
 A few revolving months should waft him o'er,
 Fraught with bold warriors, and a boundless store.
 Oh thou ! whom age has taught to understand, 425
 And Heaven has guided with a favouring hand !
 On god or mortal to obtrude a lie
 Forbear, and dread to flatter, as to die.
 Not for such ends my house and heart are free,
 But dear respect to Jove, and charity." 430
 " And why, oh swain of unbelieving mind !"
 Thus quick replied the wisest of mankind,
 " Doubt you my oath ? yet more my faith to try,
 A solemn compact let us ratify,
 And witness every power that rules the sky ! 435
 If here Ulysses from his labours rest,
 Be then my-prize a tunic and a vest ;

And, where my hopes invite me, straight transport
 In safety to Dulichium's friendly court.
 But if he greets not thy desiring eye, 440
 Hurl me from yon dread precipice on high ;
 'The due reward of fraud and perjury."

"Doubtless, oh guest ! great laud and praise were
 mine,"

Replied the swain, for spotless faith divine,
 "If, after social rites and gifts bestow'd, 445
 I stain'd my hospitable hearth with blood.
 How would the gods my righteous toils succeed,
 And bless the hand that made a stranger bleed ?
 No more—the approaching hours of silent night
 First claim refection, then to rest invite ; 450
 Beneath our humble cottage let us haste,
 And here, unenvied, rural dainties taste."

Thus communed these ; while to their lowly dome
 The full-fed swine return'd with evening home ;
 Compell'd, reluctant, to their several styes, 455
 With din obstreperous, and ungrateful cries.
 Then to the slaves : "Now from the herd the best
 Select, in honour of our foreign guest :
 With him let us the genial banquet share,
 For great and many are the griefs we bear ; 460
 While those who from our labours heap their board
 Blaspheme their feeder and forget their lord."

Thus speaking, with despatchful hand he took
 A weighty axe, and cleft the solid oak ;
 This on the earth he piled ; a boar full fed, 465
 Of five years' age, before the pile was led :
 The swain, whom acts of piety delight,
 Observant of the gods, begins the rite :
 First shears the forehead of the bristly boar,
 And suppliant stands, invoking every power 470
 To speed Ulysses to his native shore.
 A knotty stake then aiming at his head,
 Down dropp'd he groaning, and the spirit fled.
 The scorching flames climb round on every side :
 Then the singed members they with skill divide ; 475

On these, in rolls of fat involved with art,
 The choicest morsels lay from every part.
 Some in the flames bestrew'd with flour they threw;
 Some cut in fragments from the forks they drew:
 These while on several tables they dispose, 480
 A priest himself the blameless rustic rose;
 Expert the destined victim to dispart
 In seven just portions, pure of hand and heart.

One sacred to the nymphs apart they lay;
 Another to the winged son of May: 485
 The rural tribe in common share the rest,
 The king the chine, the honour of the feast,
 Who sat delighted at his servant's board;
 The faithful servant joy'd his unknown lord.

"Oh be thou dear," Ulysses cried, "to Jove, 490
 As well thou claim'st a grateful stranger's love!"

"Be then thy thanks," the bounteous swain replied,
 "Enjoyment of the good the gods provide.
 From God's own hand descend our joys and woes;
 These he decrees, and he but suffers those: 495
 All power is his, and whatsoe'er he wills,
 The will itself, omnipotent, fulfils."

This said, the first fruits to the gods he gave;
 Then pour'd of offer'd wine the sable wave:
 In great Ulysses' hand he placed the bowl, 500
 He sat, and sweet refection cheer'd his soul.

The bread from canisters Mesaulius gave;
 (Eumæus' proper treasure bought this slave,
 And led from Taphos, to attend his board,
 A servant added to his absent lord;) 505

His task it was the wheaten loaves to lay,
 And from the banquet take the bowls away.
 And now the rage of hunger was repress'd,
 And each betakes him to his couch to rest.

Now came the night, and darkness cover'd o'er
 The face of things; the winds began to roar; 511
 The driving storm the watery west wind pours,
 And Jove descends in deluges of showers.

Studious of rest and warmth, Ulysses lies,
Foreseeing from the first the storm would rise; 515
In mere necessity of coat and cloak,
With artful preface to his host he spoke:

“Hear me, my friends, who this good banquet
grace;

’Tis sweet to play the fool in time and place,
And wine can of their wits the wise beguile, 520
Make the sage frolic, and the serious smile,
The grave in merry measures frisk about,
And many a long-repent’d word bring out.

Since to be talkative I now commence,
Let wit cast off the sullen yoke of sense. 525
Once I was strong, (would Heaven restore those
days!)

And with my betters claim’d a share of praise.
Ulysses, Menelaus, led forth a band,
And join’d me with them; (’twas their own com-
mand;)

A deathful ambush for the foe to lay, 530
Beneath Troy’s walls by night we took our way:
There, clad in arms, along the marshes spread,
We made the osier-fringed bank our bed.
Full soon the inclemency of heaven I feel,
Nor had these shoulders covering, but of steel. 535
Sharp blew the north; snow whitening all the fields
Froze with the blast, and gathering glazed our
shields.

There all but I, well fenced with cloak and vest,
Lay cover’d by their ample shields at rest.
Fool that I was! I left behind my own; 540
The skill of weather and of winds unknown,
And trusted to my coat and shield alone!
When now was wasted more than half the night,
And the stars faded at approaching light,
Sudden I jogg’d Ulysses, who was laid 545
Fast by my side, and shivering thus I said:

“Here longer in this field I cannot lie;
The winter pinches, and with cold I die,

And die ashamed, (oh wisest of mankind!)
'The only fool who left his cloak behind.' 550

"He thought and answer'd: hardly waking yet,
Sprung in his mind a momentary wit:
(That wit, which or in council or in fight,
Still met the emergence, and determined right.)
'Hush thee,' he cried, (soft whispering in my ear,)
'Speak not a word, lest any Greek may hear.' 556
And then, (supporting on his arm his head,)
'Hear me, companions!' thus aloud he said;
'Methinks too distant from the fleet we lie:
Ev'n now a vision stood before my eye, 560
And sure the warning vision was from high:
Let from among us some swift courier rise,
Haste to the general, and demand supplies.'

"Up started Thoas straight, Andræmon's son,
Nimble he rose, and cast his garment down; 565
Instant, the racer vanish'd off the ground;
'That instant in his cloak I wrapp'd me round:
And safe I slept, till brightly dawning shone
The morn conspicuous on her golden throne. 569

"Oh were my strength as then, as then my age!
Some friend would fence me from the winter's rage.
Yet, tatter'd as I look, I challenged then
The honours and the offices of men:
Some master, or some servant would allow
A cloak and vest—but I am nothing now!" 575

"Well hast thou spoke," rejoin'd the attentive
swain;

"Thy lips letfall no idle word or vain!
Nor garment shalt thou want, nor aught beside,
Meet for the wandering suppliant to provide.
But in the morning take thy clothes again, 580
For here one vest suffices every swain;
No change of garments to our hinds is known;
But when return'd, the good Ulysses' son
With better hand shall grace with fit attires
His guest, and send thee where thy soul desires."

The honest herdsman rose, as this he said, 586
And drew before the hearth the stranger's bed :
The fleecy spoils of sheep, a goat's rough hide
He spreads ; and adds a mantle thick and wide ;
With store to heap above him, and below, 590
And guard each quarter as the tempests blow.
There lay the king and all the rest supine ;
All, but the careful master of the swine :
Forth hasted he to tend his bristly care ;
Well arm'd, and fenced against nocturnal air : 595
His weighty falchion o'er his shoulder tied :
His shaggy cloak a mountain goat supplied :
With his broad spear, the dread of dogs and men,
He seeks his lodging in the rocky den.
There to the tusky herd he bends his way, 600
Where, screen'd from Boreas, high o'erarch'd they
lay.

BOOK XV.

ARGUMENT.

The Return of Telemachus.

THE goddess Minerva commands Telemachus in a vision to return to Ithaca—Pisistratus and he take leave of Menelaus, and arrive at Pylos, where they part; and Telemachus sets sail, after having received on board Theoclymenus the soothsayer—The scene then changes to the cottage of Eumæus, who entertains Ulysses with a recital of his adventures—In the mean time Telemachus arrives on the coast, and sending the vessel to the town, proceeds by himself to the lodge of Eumæus.

Now had Minerva reach'd those ample plains,
Famed for the dance, where Menelaus reigns;
Anxious she flies to great Ulysses' heir,
His instant voyage challenged all her care.
Beneath the royal portico display'd, 5
With Nestor's son Telemachus was laid;
In sleep profound the son of Nestor lies;
Not thine, Ulysses!—Care unseal'd his eyes:
Restless he grieved, with various fears oppress'd,
And all thy fortunes roll'd within his breast. 10
"When, oh Telemachus!" the goddess said,
"Too long in vain, too widely hast thou stray'd,
Thus leaving careless thy paternal right
The robbers' prize, the prey to lawless might.
On fond pursuits neglectful while you roam, 15
Ev'n now the hand of rapine sacks the dome.
Hence to Atrides; and his leave implore
To launch thy vessel for thy natal shore."

Fly, while thy mother virtuous yet withstands
Her kindred's wishes, and her sire's commands: 20
Through both, Euryinachus pursues the dame,
And with the noblest gifts asserts his claim.
Hence therefore, while thy stores thy own remain ;
Thou know'st the practice of the female train,
Lost in the children of the present spouse, 25
They slight the pledges of their former vows ;
Their love is always with the lover pass'd ;
Still the succeeding flame expels the last.
Let o'er thy house some chosen maid preside,
Till Heaven decrees to bless thee in a bride. 30
But now thy more attentive ears incline,
Observe the warnings of a power divine ;
For thee their snares the suitor lords shall lay
In Samos' sands, or straits of Ithaca ;
To seize thy life shall lurk the murderous band, 35
Ere yet thy footsteps press thy native land.
No : sooner far their riot and their lust
All-covering earth shall bury deep in dust !
Then distant from the scatter'd islands steer,
Nor let the night retard thy full career : 40
Thy heavenly guardian shall instruct the gales
To smoothe thy passage and supply thy sails :
And when at Ithaca thy labour ends,
Send to the town the vessel with thy friends ;
But seek thou first the master of the swine ; 45
(For still to thee his loyal thoughts incline ;)
There pass the night : while he his course pursues
To bring Penelope the wish'd-for news,
That thou, safe sailing from the Pylian strand,
Art come to bless her in thy native land." 50

Thus spoke the goddess, and resumed her flight
To the pure regions of eternal light.
Meanwhile Pisistratus he gently shakes,
And with these words the slumbering youth awakes :
" Rise, son of Nestor ; for the road prepare, 55
And join the harness'd coursers to the car."

“What cause,” he cried, “can justify our flight
To tempt the dangers of forbidding night?
Here wait we rather, till approaching day
Shall prompt our speed, and point the ready way. 60
Nor think of flight before the Spartan king
Shall bid farewell, and bounteous presents bring;
Gifts, which to distant ages safely stored,
The sacred act of friendship shall record.”

Thus he. But when the dawn bestreak'd the east,
The king from Helen rose, and sought his guest. 66
As soon as his approach the hero knew,
The splendid mantle round him first he threw,
'Then o'er his ample shoulders whirl'd the cloak,
Respectful met the monarch, and bespoke: 70

“Hail, great Atrides, favour'd of high Jove!
Let not thy friends in vain for license move.
Swift let us measure back the watery way,
Nor check our speed, impatient of delay.”

“If with desire so strong thy bosom glows, 75
Ill,” said the king, “should I thy wish oppose:
For oft in others freely I reprove
The ill-timed efforts of officious love;
Who love too much, hate in the like extreme,
And both the golden mean alike condemn. 80

Alike he thwarts the hospitable end,
Who drives the free, or stays the hasty friend:
True friendship's laws are by this rule express'd,
Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.
Yet stay, my friends, and in your chariot take 85
The noblest presents that our love can make;

Meantime commit we to our women's care
Some choice domestic viands to prepare;
The traveller, rising from the banquet gay,
Eludes the labours of the tedious way. 90

Then if a wider course shall rather please
Through spacious Argos and the realms of Greece,
Atrides in his chariot shall attend,
Himself thy convoy to each royal friend.

No prince will let Ulysses' heir remove 95
 Without some pledge, some monument of love :
 These will the caldron, these the tripod give,
 From those the well-pair'd mules we shall receive,
 Or bowl emboss'd whose golden figures live." 99

To whom the youth, for prudence famed, replied :
 "Oh monarch, care of Heaven! thy people's pride !
 No friend in Ithaca my place supplies,
 No powerful hands are there, no watchful eyes :
 My stores exposed and fenceless house demand
 The speediest succour from my guardian hand ; 105
 Lest in a search too anxious and too vain
 Of one lost joy, I loose what yet remain."

His purpose when the generous warrior heard,
 He charged the household cates to be prepared.
 Now with the dawn from his adjoining home, 110
 Was Boethœdes Eteoneus come ;
 Swift as the word he forms the rising blaze,
 And o'er the coals the smoking fragments lays.
 Meantime the king, his son, and Helen, went 114
 Where the rich wardrobe breathed a costly scent.
 The king selected from the glittering rows
 A bowl ; the prince a silver beaker chose.
 The beauteous queen revolved with careful eyes
 Her various textures of unnumber'd dies,
 And chose the largest ; with no vulgar art 120
 Her own fair hands embroider'd every part :
 Beneath the rest it lay divinely bright,
 Like radiant Hesper o'er the gems of night.
 Then with each gift they hasten'd to their guest,
 And thus the king Ulysses' heir address'd : 125
 "Since fix'd are thy resolves, may thundering Jove
 With happiest omens thy desires approve !
 The silver bowl, whose costly margins shine
 Enchased with gold, this valued gift be thine ;
 To me this present, of Vulcanian frame, 130
 From Sidon's hospitable monarch came ;
 To thee we now consign the precious load,
 The pride of kings, and labour of a god."

Then gave the cup, while Megapenthe brought
The silver vase with living sculpture wrought. 135
The beauteous queen, advancing next, display'd
The shining veil, and thus endearing said :

“ Accept, dear youth, this monument of love,
Long since, in better days, by Helen wove :
Safe in thy mother's care the vesture lay, 140
To deck thy bride, and grace thy nuptial day.
Meantime mayst thou with happiest speed regain
Thy stately palace, and thy wide domain.”

She said, and gave the veil ; with grateful look
The prince the variegated present took. 145
And now, when through the royal dome they pass'd,
High on a throne the king each stranger placed.
A golden ewer the attendant damsel brings,
Replete with water from the crystal springs ;
With copious streams the shining vase supplies 150
A silver laver of capacious size.

They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
The glittering canisters are crown'd with bread ;
Viands of various kinds allure the taste,
Of choicest sort and savour ; rich repast ! 155
While Eteoneus portions out the shares,
Atride's son the purple draught prepares.
And now, each sated with the genial feast,
And the short rage of thirst and hunger ceased,
Ulysses' son, with his illustrious friend, 160
The horses join, the polished car ascend.
Along the court the fiery steeds rebound,
And the wide portal echoes to the sound.

The king precedes ; a bowl with fragrant wine
(Libation destined to the powers divine) 165
His right hand held : before the steeds he stands,
Then, mix'd with prayers, he utters these commands :

“ Farewell, and prosper, youths ! let Nestor know
What grateful thoughts still in this bosom glow,
For all the proofs of his paternal care, 170
Through the long dangers of the ten years' war.”

"Ah! doubt not our report," the prince rejoin'd,
 "Of all the virtues of thy generous mind.
 And oh! return'd might we Ulysses meet!
 To him thy presents show, thy words repeat: 175
 How will each speech his grateful wonder raise!
 How will each gift indulge us in thy praise!"

Scarce ended thus the prince, when on the right
 Advanced the bird of Jove: auspicious sight!
 A milk-white fowl his clinching talons bore, 180
 With care domestic pamper'd at the floor.
 Peasants in vain with threat'ning cries pursue,
 In solemn speed the bird majestic flew
 Full dexter to the car: the prosperous sight
 Fill'd every breast with wonder and delight. 185

But Nestor's son the cheerful silence broke,
 And in these words the Spartan chief bespoke:
 "Say if to us the gods these omens send,
 Or fates peculiar to thyself portend?"

While yet the monarch paused, with doubts oppress'd, 190
 The beauteous queen relieved his labouring breast.

"Hear me," she cried, "to whom the gods have
 given
 To read this sign, and mystic sense of Heaven.
 As thus the plummy sovereign of the air
 Left on the mountain's brow his callow care, 195
 And wander'd through the wide ethereal way
 To pour his wrath on yon luxurious prey:
 So shall thy godlike father, toss'd in vain
 Through all the dangers of the boundless main,
 Arrive (or is perchance already come) 200
 From slaughter'd gluttons to release the dome."

"Oh! if this promised bliss by thundering Jove,"
 The prince replied, "stand fix'd in fate above;
 To thee, as to some god, I'll temples raise,
 And crown thy altars with the costly blaze." 205

He said; and, bending o'er his chariot, flung
 Athwart the fiery steeds the smarting thong;

The bounding shafts upon the harness play,
Till night descending intercepts the way.
To Diocles at Pheræ they repair, 210
Whose boasted sire was sacred Alpheus' heir;
With him all night the youthful strangers staid,
Nor found the hospitable rites unpaid.
But soon as morning from her orient bed
Had tinged the mountains with her earliest red, 215
They join'd the steeds, and on the chariot sprung,
The brazen portals in their passage rung.

To Pylos soon they came; when thus begun
To Nestor's heir Ulysses' godlike son :
“ Let not Pisistratus in vain be press'd, 220
Nor unconsenting hear his friend's request;
His friend by long hereditary claim,
In toils his equal, and in years the same.
No farther from our vessel, I implore,
The coursers drive; but lash them to the shore. 225
Too long thy father would his friend detain;
I dread his proffer'd kindness urged in vain.”

The hero paused, and ponder'd this request,
While love and duty warr'd within his breast.
At length resolved, he turn'd his ready hand, 230
And lash'd his panting coursers to the strand.
There, while within the poop with care he stored
The regal presents of the Spartan lord,
“ With speed begone,” said he; “ call every mate,
Ere yet to Nestor I the tale relate : 235
'Tis true, the fervour of his generous heart
Brooks no repulse, nor couldst thou soon depart :
Himself will seek thee here, nor wilt thou find,
In words alone, the Pylian monarch kind.
But when, arrived, he thy return shall know, 240
How will his breast with honest fury glow !”
'This said, the sounding strokes his horses fire,
And soon he reach'd the palace of his sire.

“ Now,” cried Telemachus, “ with speedy care
Hoist every sail, and every oar prepare.” 245

Swift as the word his willing mates obey,
And seize their seats, impatient for the sea.

Meantime the prince with sacrifice adores
Minerva, and her guardian aid implores ;
When lo ! a wretch ran breathless to the shore, 250
New from his crime, and reeking yet with gore.
A seer he was, from great Melampus sprung,
Melampus, who in Pylos flourish'd long,
Till, urged by wrongs, a foreign realm he chose,
Far from the hateful cause of all his woes. 255
Neleus his treasures one long year detains ;
As long he groan'd in Philacus's chains :
Meantime, what anguish and what rage combined,
For lovely Pero rack'd his labouring mind !
Yet 'scaped he death ; and vengeful of his wrong
To Pylos drove the lowing herds along : 261
Then (Neleus vanquish'd, and consign'd the fair
'To Bias' arms) he sought a foreign air ;
Argos the rich for his retreat he chose,
There form'd his empire ; there his palace rose. 265
From him Antiphates and Mantius came :
The first begot Oicleus great in fame,
And he Amphiaraus, immortal name !
The people's saviour, and divinely wise,
Beloved by Jove, and him who gilds the skies, 270
Yet short his date of life ! by female pride he dies.
From Mantius, Clitus, whom Aurora's love
Snatched for his beauty to the thrones above ;
And Polyphides, on whom Phœbus shone
With fullest rays, Amphiaraus now gone ; 275
In Hyperesia's groves he made abode,
And taught mankind the counsels of the god.
From him sprung Theoclymenus, who found
(The sacred wine yet foaming on the ground)
Telemachus : whom, as to heaven he press'd 280
His ardent vows, the stranger thus address'd :

“ Oh thou, that dost thy happy course prepare
With pure libations and with solemn prayer ;

By that dread power to whom thy vows are paid ;
By all the lives of these ; thy own dear head, 285
Declare sincerely to no foe's demand

Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land."

"Prepare then," said Telemachus, "to know
A tale from falsehood free, not free from wo.
From Ithaca, of royal birth, I came, 290

And great Ulysses (ever-honour'd name!)
Was once my sire, though now for ever lost,
In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost!
Whose fate inquiring through the world we rove ;
The last, the wretched proof of filial love." 295

The stranger then : "Nor shall I aught conceal,
But the dire secret of my fate reveal.
Of my own tribe an Argive wretch I slew,
Whose powerful friends the luckless deed pursue
With unrelenting rage, and force from home 300
The blood-stain'd exile, ever doom'd to roam.

But bear, oh bear me o'er yon azure flood ;
Receive the suppliant ! spare my destined blood !"

"Stranger," replied the prince, "securely rest
Affianced in our faith ; henceforth our guest." 305
Thus affable, Ulysses' godlike heir

Takes from the stranger's hand the glittering spear :
He climbs the ship, ascends the stern with haste,
And by his side the guest accepted placed.

The chief his orders gives : the obedient band 310
With due observance wait the chief's command ;
With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind.

Minerva calls ; the ready gales obey
With rapid speed to whirl them o'er the sea. 315

Crunus they pass'd, next Chalcis roll'd away,
When thickening darkness closed the doubtful day ;
The silver Phæa's glittering rills they lost,
And skimm'd along by Elis' sacred coast.

Then cautious through the rocky reaches wind, 320
And, turning sudden, shun the death design'd.

Meantime the king, Eumæus, and the rest,
Sat in the cottage, at their rural feast :
The banquet pass'd, and satiate every man,
To try his host, Ulysses thus began : 325

“ Yet one night more, my friends, indulge your
guest ;

The last I purpose in your walls to rest :
To-morrow for myself I must provide,
And only ask your counsel, and a guide ;
Patient to roam the street, by hunger led, 330
And bless the friendly hand that gives me bread.

There in Ulysses' roof I may relate
Ulysses' wanderings to his royal mate ;
Or, mingling with the suitors' haughty train,
Not undeserving some support obtain. 335

Hermes to me his various gifts imparts,
Patron of industry and manual arts :
Few can with me in dextrous works contend,
The pyre to build, the stubborn oak to rend ;
To turn the tasteful viand o'er the flame ; 340
Or foam the goblet with a purple stream.

Such are the tasks of men of mean estate,
Whom Fortune dooms to serve the rich and great.”

“ Alas !” Eumæus with a sigh rejoin'd,
“ How sprung a thought so monstrous in thy mind ?
If on that godless race thou wouldst attend, 346
Fate owes thee sure a miserable end !

Their wrongs and blasphemies ascend the sky,
And pull descending vengeance from on high.
Not such, my friend, the servants of their feast ; 350
A blooming train in rich embroidery dress'd,
With earth's whole tribute the bright table bends,
And smiling round celestial youth attends.

Stay then : no eye askance beholds thee here ;
Sweet is thy converse to each social ear ; 355
Well pleased, and pleasing, in our cottage rest,
Till good Telemachus accepts his guest
With genial gifts, and change of fair attires,
And safe conveys thee where thy soul desires.”

To him the man of woes: "Oh gracious Jove!
 Reward this stranger's hospitable love! 361
 Who knows the son of sorrow to relieve,
 Cheers the sad heart, nor lets affliction grieve.
 Of all the ills unhappy mortals know,
 A life of wanderings is the greatest wo: 365
 On all their weary ways wait care and pain,
 And pine and penury, a meager train.
 To such a man since harbour you afford,
 Relate the further fortunes of your lord;
 What cares his mother's tender breast engage, 370
 And sire forsaken on the verge of age;
 Beneath the sun prolong they yet their breath,
 Or range the house of darkness and of death?"

To whom the swain: "Attend what you inquire;
 Laertes lives, the miserable sire, 375
 Lives, but implores of every power to lay
 The burden down, and wishes for the day.
 Torn from his offspring in the eve of life,
 Torn from the embraces of his tender wife,
 Sole, and all comfortless, he wastes away 380
 Old age, untimely posting ere his day.
 She too, sad mother! for Ulysses lost
 Pined out her bloom, and vanish'd to a ghost.
 (So dire a fate, ye righteous gods! avert
 From every friendly, every feeling heart!) 385
 While yet she was, though clouded o'er with grief,
 Her pleasing converse minister'd relief:
 With Ctimene, her youngest daughter, bred,
 One roof contain'd us, and one table fed.
 But when the softly stealing pace of time 390
 Crept on from childhood into youthful prime,
 To Samos' isle she sent the wedded fair;
 Me to the fields, to tend the rural care;
 Array'd in garments her own hands had wove,
 Nor less the darling object of her love. 395
 Her hapless death my brighter days o'er cast,
 Yet Providence deserts me not at last;

My present labours food and drink procure,
And more, the pleasure to relieve the poor.
Small is the comfort from the queen to hear 400
Unwelcome news, or vex the royal ear ;
Blank and discountenanced the servants stand,
Nor dare to question where the proud command :
No profit springs beneath usurping powers ;
Want feeds not there, where luxury devours, 405
Nor harbours charity where riot reigns :
Proud are the lords, and wretched are the swains."

The suffering chief at this began to melt ;
"And, oh Eumæus ! thou," he cries, "hast felt
The spite of Fortune too ! her cruel hand 410
Snatch'd thee an infant from thy native land !
Snatch'd from thy parents' arms, thy parents' eyes,
To early wants ! a man of miseries !
'Thy whole sad story, from its first, declare :
Sunk the fair city by the rage of war, 415
Where once thy parents dwelt ? or did they keep,
In humbler life, the lowing herds and sheep ?
So left perhaps to tend the fleecy train,
'Rude pirates seized, and shipp'd thee o'er the main ?
Doom'd a fair prize to grace some prince's board, 420
The worthy purchase of a foreign lord."

"If then my fortunes can delight my friend,
A story fruitful of events attend :
Another's sorrow may thy ear enjoy,
And wine the lengthen'd intervals employ. 425
Long nights the now declining year bestows ;
A part we consecrate to soft repose,
A part in pleasing talk we entertain ;
For too much rest itself becomes a pain.
Let those, whom sleep invites, the call obey, 430
Their cares resuming with the dawning day :
Here let us feast, and to the feast be join'd
Discourse, the sweeter banquet of the mind :
Review the series of our lives, and taste
'The melancholy joy of evils pass'd : 435

For he who much has suffer'd, much will know,
And pleased remembrance builds delight on wo.

“Above Ortygia lies an isle of fame,
Far hence remote, and Syria is the name :
(There curious eyes inscribed with wonder trace 440
The sun's diurnal, and his annual race :)
Not large, but fruitful ; stored with grass, to keep
The bellowing oxen and the bleating sheep ;
Her sloping hills the mantling vines adorn,
And her rich valleys wave with golden corn. 445
No want, no famine, the glad natives know,
Nor sink by sickness to the shades below :
But when a length of years unnerves the strong,
Apollo comes, and Cynthia comes along.
They bend the silver bow with tender skill, 450
And, void of pain, the silent arrows kill.
Two equal tribes this fertile land divide,
Where two fair cities rise with equal pride.
But both in constant peace one prince obey,
And Ctesius there, my father, holds the sway. 455
Freighted, it seems, with toys of every sort,
A ship of Sidon anchor'd in our port ;
What time it chanced the palace entertain'd,
Skill'd in rich works, a woman of their land :
This nymph, where anchor'd the Phœnician train,
To wash her robes descending to the main, 461
A smooth-tongued sailor won her to his mind
(For love deceives the best of woman kind.)
A sudden trust from sudden liking grew ;
She told her name, her race, and all she knew. 465
'I too,' she cried, 'from glorious Sidon came,
My father Arybas, of wealthy fame :
But, snatch'd by pirates from my native place,
The Taphians sold me to this man's embrace.' 469
“‘Haste then,’ the false designing youth replied,
'Haste to thy country ; love shall be thy guide ;
Haste to thy father's house, thy father's breast,
For still he lives, and lives with riches bless'd.’

“ ‘Swear first,’ she cried, ‘ye sailors! to restore
A wretch in safety to her native shore.’ 475

Swift as she ask’d, the ready sailors swore.
She then proceeds: ‘Now let our compact made
Be nor by signal nor by word betray’d,
Nor near me any of your crew descried,
By road frequented, or by fountain side. 480

Be silence still our guard. The monarch’s spies
(For watchful age is ready to surmise)
Are still at hand; and this, reveal’d, must be
Death to yourselves, eternal chains to me.

Your vessel loaded, and your traffic passed, 485
Despatch a wary messenger with haste:

Then gold and costly treasures will I bring,
And more, the infant offspring of the king.
Him, childlike wandering forth, I’ll lead away,
(A noble prize!) and to your ship convey.’ 490

“Thus spoke the dame, and homeward took the
road.

A year they traffic, and their vessel load.
Their stores complete, and ready now to weigh,
A spy was sent their summons to convey:
An artist to my father’s palace came, 495

With gold and amber chains, elaborate frame:
Each female eye the glittering links employ;
They turn, review, and cheapen every toy.
He took the occasion, as they stood intent,
Gave her the sign, and to his vessel went. 500

She straight pursued, and seized my willing arm;
I follow’d smiling, innocent of harm.

Three golden goblets in the porch she found;
(The guests not enter’d, but the table crown’d;)
Hid in her fraudulent bosom these she bore: 505

Now set the sun, and darken’d all the shore.
Arriving then, where tilting on the tides
Prepared to launch the freighted vessel rides,
Aboard they heave us, mount their decks, and sweep
With level oar along the glassy deep. 510

Six calmy days and six smooth nights we sail,
 And constant Jove supplied the gentle gale.
 The seventh, the fraudulent wretch, (no cause descried,)
 Touch'd by Diana's vengeful arrow, died.
 Down dropp'd the caitiff corse, a worthless load, 515
 Down to the deep; there roll'd, the future food
 Of fierce sea wolves, and monsters of the flood.
 A helpless infant I remain'd behind;
 Thence borne to Ithaca by wave and wind;
 Sold to Laertes by divine command, 520
 And now adopted to a foreign land."

To him the king: "Reciting thus thy cares,
 My secret soul in all thy sorrow shares;
 But one choice blessing (such is Jove's high will)
 Has sweeten'd all thy bitter draught of ill; 525
 Torn from thy country to no hapless end,
 The gods have, in a master, given a friend.
 Whatever frugal nature needs is thine,
 (For she needs little,) daily bread and wine.
 While I, so many wanderings past, and woes, 530
 Live but on what thy poverty bestows."

So pass'd in pleasing dialogue away
 The night; then down to short repose they lay;
 Till radiant rose the messenger of day.
 While in the port of Ithaca, the band 535
 Of young Telemachus approach'd the land;
 Their sails they loosed, they lash'd the mast aside,
 And cast their anchors, and the cables tied;
 Then on the breezy shore, descending, join
 In grateful banquet o'er the rosy wine. 540
 When thus the prince: "Now each his course pursue:

I to the fields, and to the city you.
 Long absent hence, I dedicate this day
 My swains to visit, and the works survey.
 Expect me with the morn, to pay the skies 545
 Our debt of safe return in feast and sacrifice."

Then Theoclymenus: "But who shall lend,
 Meantime, protection to thy stranger friend?"

Straight to the queen and palace shall I fly,
Or yet more distant, to some lord apply ?" 550

The prince return'd : " Renown'd in days of yore
Has stood our father's hospitable door ;
No other roof a stranger should receive,
Nor other hands than ours the welcome give.
But in my absence riot fills the place, 555
Nor bears the modest queen a stranger's face ;
From noisy revel far remote she flies,
But rarely seen, or seen with weeping eyes.

No—let Eurymachus receive my guest,
Of nature courteous, and by far the best ; 560
He woos the queen with more respectful flame,
And emulates her former husband's fame :
With what success, 'tis Jove's alone to know,
And the hoped nuptials turn to joy or wo."

Thus speaking, on the right upsoar'd in air 565
The hawk, Apollo's swift-wing'd messenger :
His deathful pounces tore a trembling dove ;
The clotted feathers, scatter'd from above,
Between the hero and the vessel pour
Thick plumage, mingled with a sanguine shower.

The observing augur took the prince aside, 571
Seized by the hand, and thus prophetic cried :
" Yon bird, that dexter cuts the aerial road,
Rose ominous, nor flies without a god :
No race but thine shall Ithaca obey, 575
To thine, for ages, Heaven decrees the sway."

" Succeed the omens, gods !" the youth rejoin'd ;
" Soon shall my bounties speak a grateful mind,
And soon each envied happiness attend
The man, who calls Telemachus his friend." 580
Then to Peiræus : " Thou whom time has proved
A faithful servant, by the prince beloved !
Till we returning shall our guest demand,
Accept this charge with honour, at our hand."

To this Peiræus : " Joyful I obey, 585
Well pleased the hospitable rites to pay.

The presence of thy guest shall best reward
(If long thy stay) the absence of my lord."

With that, their anchors he commands to weigh,
Mount the tall bark, and launch into the sea. 590
All with obedient haste forsake the shores,
And placed in order, spread their equal oars.
'Then from the deck the prince his sandals takes ;
Poised in his hand the pointed javelin shakes.
They part ; while, lessening from the hero's view,
Swift to the town the well-row'd galley flew : 596
'The hero trod the margin of the main,
And reach'd the mansion of his faithful swain.

BOOK XVI.

ARGUMENT.

The discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus.

TELEMACHUS arriving at the lodge of Eumæus, sends him to carry Penelope the news of his return—Minerva appearing to Ulysses, commands him to discover himself to his son—The princes, who had lain in ambush to intercept Telemachus in his way, their project being defeated, return to Ithaca.

Soon as the morning blush'd along the plains,
Ulysses, and the monarch of the swains,
Awake the sleeping fires, their meal prepare,
And forth to pasture send the bristly care.
The prince's near approach the dogs descry, 5
And fawning round his feet confess their joy.
Their gentle blandishment the king survey'd,
Heard his resounding step, and instant said:
“Some well-known friend, Eumæus, bends this
way:

His steps I hear; the dogs familiar play.” 10

While yet he spoke, the prince advancing drew
Nigh to the lodge, and now appear'd in view.
Transported from his seat Eumæus sprung,
Dropp'd the full bowl, and round his bosom hung;
Kissing his cheek, his hand, while from his eye 15
The tears rain'd copious in a shower of joy.
As some fond sire who ten long winters grieves,
From foreign climes an only son receives,
(Child of his age,) with strong paternal joy
Forward he springs, and clasps the favourite boy:

So round the youth his arms Eumæus spread, 21
As if the grave had given him from the dead.

“And is it thou? my ever-dear delight!
Oh art thou come to bless my longing sight!
Never, I never hoped to view this day, 25
When o’er the waves you plough’d the desperate
way.

Enter, my child! Beyond my hopes restored,
Oh give these eyes to feast upon their lord.
Enter, oh seldom seen! for lawless powers
Too much detain thee from these sylvan bowers.”

The prince replied: “Eumæus, I obey; 31
To seek thee, friend, I hither took my way.
But say, if in the court the queen reside
Severely chaste, or if commenced a bride?”

Thus he; and thus the monarch of the swains: 35
“Severely chaste Penelope remains;
But, lost to every joy, she wastes the day
In tedious cares, and weeps the night away.”

He ended, and (receiving as they pass
The javelin, pointed with a star of brass) 40
They reach’d the dome; the dome with marble
shined.

His seat Ulysses to the prince resign’d.
“Not so,” exclaims the prince with decent grace,
“For me, this house shall find an humbler place:
To usurp the honours due to silver hairs 45
And reverend strangers modest youth forbears.”

Instant the swain the spoils of beasts supplies,
And bids the rural throne with osiers rise.
There sat the prince: the feast Eumæus spread,
And heap’d the shining canisters with bread. 50
Thick o’er the board the plenteous viands lay,
The frugal remnants of the former day.
Then in a bowl he tempers generous wines,
Around whose verge a mimic ivy twines.
And now, the rage of thirst and hunger fled, 55
Thus young Ulysses to Eumæus said:

“ Whence, father, from what shore this stranger,
say ?

What vessel bore him o’er the watery way ;
To human step our land impervious lies,
And round the coast circumfluent oceans rise.” 60

The swain returns : “ A tale of sorrows hear :
In spacious Crete he drew his natal air ;
Long doom’d to wander o’er the land and main,
For Heaven has wove his thread of life with pain.
Half breathless ’scaping to the land he flew 65
From ’Thresprot mariners, a murderous crew.
To thee, my son, the suppliant I resign ;
I gave him my protection, grant him thine.”

“ Hard task,” he cries, “ thy virtue gives thy
friend,

Willing to aid, unable to defend. 70

Can strangers safely in the court reside,
Mid the swell’d insolence of lust and pride ?

Ev’n I unsafe : the queen in doubt to wed,
Or pay due honours to the nuptial bed ?

Perhaps she weds regardless of her fame, 75
Deaf to the mighty Ulyssean name.

However, stranger ! from our grace receive
Such honours as befit a prince to give ;

Sandals, a sword and robes, respect to prove,
And safe to sail with ornaments of love. 80

Till then, thy guest amid the rural train,
Far from the court, from danger far, detain.

’Tis mine with food the hungry to supply,
And clothe the naked from the inclement sky.

Here dwell in safety from the suitors’ wrongs, 85
And the rude insults of ungovern’d tongues.

For shouldst thou suffer, powerless to relieve,
I must behold it, and can only grieve.

The brave encompass’d by a hostile train,
O’erpower’d by numbers, is but brave in vain.” 90

To whom, while anger in his bosom glows,
With warmth replies the man of mighty woes :

“ Since audience mild is deign’d, permit my tongue
At once to pity and resent thy wrong.
My heart weeps blood to see a soul so brave 95
Live to base insolence of power a slave.
But tell me, dost thou, prince, dost thou behold,
And hear their midnight revels uncontroll’d?
Say, do thy subjects in bold faction rise,
Or priests in fabled oracles advise? 100
Or are thy brothers, who should aid thy power,
Turn’d mean deserters in the needful hour?
Oh that I were from great Ulysses sprung,
Or that these wither’d nerves like thine were
strung! 104
Or, heavens! might he return! (and soon appear
He shall, I trust; a hero scorns despair:)
Might he return, I yield my life a prey
To my worst foe, if that avenging day
Be not their last: but should I lose my life,
Oppress’d by numbers in the glorious strife, 110
I choose the nobler part, and yield my breath,
Rather than bear dishonour, worse than death;
Than see the hand of violence invade
The reverend stranger, and the spotless maid;
Than see the wealth of kings consumed in waste,
The drunkards revel, and the gluttons feast.” 116
Thus he, with anger flashing from his eye;
Sincere the youthful hero made reply:
“ Nor leagued in factious arms my subjects rise,
Nor priests in fabled oracles advise; 120
Nor are my brothers, who should aid my power,
Turn’d mean deserters in the needful hour.
Ah me! I boast no brother; heaven’s dread king
Gives from our stock an only branch to spring:
Alone Laertes reign’d Arcesius’ heir, 125
Alone Ulysses drew the vital air,
And I alone the bed connubial graced,
An unblest’d offspring of a sire unblest’d!
Each neighbouring realm, conducive to our wo,
Sends forth her peers, and every peer a foe: 130

The court proud Samos and Dulichium fills,
 And lofty Zacynth crown'd with shady hills.
 Ev'n Ithaca and all her lords invade
 The imperial sceptre, and the regal bed :
 The queen, averse to love, yet awed by power, 135
 Seems half to yield, yet flies the bridal hour :
 Meantime their license uncontroll'd I bear ;
 Ev'n now they envy me the vital air :
 But Heaven will sure revenge, and gods there are.

“ But go, Eumæus ! to the queen impart 140
 Our safe return, and ease a mother's heart.
 Yet secret go ; for numerous are my foes,
 And here at least I may in peace repose.”

To whom the swain : “ I hear, and I obey :
 But old Laertes weeps his life away, 145
 And deems thee lost : shall I my speed employ
 To bless his age ; a messenger of joy ?
 The mournful hour that tore his son away
 Sent the sad sire in solitude to stray ;
 Yet busied with his slaves, to ease his wo, 150
 He dress'd the vine, and bade the garden blow,
 Nor food nor wine refused ; but since the day
 That you to Pylos plough'd the watery way,
 Nor wine nor food he tastes ; but sunk in woes,
 Wild springs the vine, no more the garden blows :
 Shut from the walks of me, to pleasure lost, 156
 Pensive and pale he wanders, half a ghost.”

“ Wretched old man !” with tears the prince re-
 turns,

“ Yet cease to go—what man so bless'd but mourns ?
 Were every wish indulged by favouring skies, 160
 This hour should give Ulysses to my eyes.
 But to the queen with speed despatchful bear
 Our safe return, and back with speed repair ;
 And let some handmaid of her train resort
 To good Laertes in his rural court.” 165

While yet he spoke, impatient of delay,
 He braced his sandals on, and strode away ;

Then from the heavens the martial goddess flies
Through the wide fields of air, and cleaves the
skies:

In form, a virgin in soft beauty's bloom, 170
Skill'd in the illustrious labours of the loom.

Alone to Ithaca she stood display'd,
But unapparent as a viewless shade
Escaped Telemachus: (the powers above,
Seen or unseen, o'er earth at pleasure move :) 175

The dogs intelligent confess'd the tread
Of power divine, and howling, trembling fled.
The goddess, beckoning, waves her deathless hands:
Dauntless the king before the goddess stands.

"Then why," she said, "oh favour'd of the skies!
Why to thy godlike son this long disguise? 181

Stand forth reveal'd; with him thy cares employ
Against thy foes; be valiant, and destroy!

Lo I descend in that avenging hour,
To combat by thy side, thy guardian power." 185

She said, and o'er him waves her wand of gold:
Imperial robes his manly limbs infold;

At once with grace divine his frame improves;
At once with majesty enlarged he moves:

Youth flush'd his reddening cheek, and from his brows
A length of hair in sable ringlets flows; 191

His blackening chin receives a deeper shade;
Then from his eyes upsprung the warrior maid.

The hero reascends: the prince o'eraw'd,
Scarce lifts his eyes, and bows as to a god. 195

Then with surprise, (surprise chastised by fears,)
"How art thou changed!" he cried, "a god appears!

Far other vests thy limbs majestic grace,
Far other glories lighten from thy face!

If heaven be thy abode, with pious care 200

Lo! I the ready sacrifice prepare:
Lo! gifts of labour'd gold adorn thy shrine,
To win thy grace: oh save us, power divine!"

"Few are my days," Ulysses made reply,
"Nor I, alas! descendant of the sky. 205

I am thy father. Oh my son! my son!
That father, for whose sake thy days have run
One scene of wo; to endless cares consigned,
And outraged by the wrongs of base mankind."

Then rushing to his arms, he kissed his boy 210
With the strong raptures of a parent's joy.

Tears bathe his cheek, and tears the ground bedew;
He strain'd him close, as to his breast he grew.

"Ah me!" exclaims the prince with fond desire,
"Thou art not—no, thou canst not be my sire. 215

Heaven such illusion only can impose,
By the false joy to aggravate my woes.

Who but a god can change the general doom,
And give to wither'd age a youthful bloom?

Late, worn with years, in weeds obscene you trod;
Now, clothed in majesty, you move a god!" 221

"Forbear," he cried, "for Heaven reserve that
name,

Give to thy father but a father's claim;

Other Ulysses shalt thou never see,

I am Ulysses, I (my son) am he. 225

Twice ten sad years o'er earth and ocean toss'd,

'Tis given at length to view my native coast.

Pallas, unconquer'd maid, my frame surrounds

With grace divine; her power admits no bounds:

She o'er my limbs old age and wrinkles shed; 230

Now strong as youth, magnificent I tread.

The gods with ease frail man depress or raise,

Exalt the lowly, or the proud debase."

He spoke, and sat. The prince with transport flew,

Hung round his neck, while tears his cheek bedew:

Nor less the father pour'd a social flood; 236

They wept abundant, and they wept aloud.

As the bold eagle with fierce sorrow stung,

Or parent vulture, mourns her ravish'd young;

They cry, they scream, their unfledged brood a prey

To some rude churl, and borne by stealth away: 241

So they aloud: and tears in tides had run,

Their grief unfinish'd with the setting sun;

But checking the full torrent in its flow,
The prince thus interrupts the solemn wo : 245
“ What ship transported thee, oh father, say,
And what bless'd hands have oar'd thee on the
way ? ”

“ All, all,” Ulysses instant made reply,
“ I tell thee all, my child, my only joy !
Phæacians bore me to the port assign'd, 250
A nation ever to the stranger kind ;
Wrapp'd in the embrace of sleep, the faithful train
O'er seas convey'd me to my native reign :
Embroider'd vestures, gold, and brass, are laid
Conceal'd in caverns in the sylvan shade. 255
Hither, intent the rival rout to slay,
And plan the scene of death, I bend my way
So Pallas wills—but thou, my son, explain
The names and numbers of the audacious train ;
'Tis mine to judge if better to employ 260
Assistant force, or singly to destroy.”

“ O'er earth,” returns the prince, “ resounds thy
name,
Thy well-tried wisdom, and thy martial fame,
Yet at thy words I start, in wonder lost ;
Can we engage, not decads, but a host ? 265
Can we alone in furious battle stand
Against that numerous and determined band ?
Hear then their numbers : from Dulichium came
Twice twenty-six, all peers of mighty name,
Six are their menial train : twice twelve the boast
Of Samos ; twenty from Zacynthus' coast ; 271
And twelve our country's pride ; to these belong
Medon and Phemius skill'd in heavenly song.
Two sewers from day to day the revels wait,
Exact of taste, and serve the feast in state. 275
With such a foe the unequal fight to try,
Were by false courage unrevenged to die.
Then what assistant powers you boast relate,
Ere yet we mingle in the stern debate ”

“Mark well my voice,” Ulysses straight replies :
“What need of aids, if favour’d by the skies? 281
If shielded to the dreadful fight we move,
By mighty Pallas, and by thundering Jove?”

“Sufficient they,” Telemachus rejoin’d,
“Against the banded powers of all mankind: 285
They, high enthroned above the rolling clouds,
Wither the strength of man, and awe the gods.”

“Such aids expect,” he cries, “when strong in
might

We rise terrific to the task of fight.
But thou, when morn salutes the aerial plain, 290
The court revisit and the lawless train:
Me thither in disguise Eumæus leads,
An aged mendicant in tatter’d weeds.
There, if base scorn insult my reverend age,
Bear it, my son! repress thy rising rage. 295
If outraged, cease that outrage to repel;
Bear it, my son! howe’er thy heart rebel.
Yet strive by prayer and counsel to restrain
Their lawless insults, though thou strive in vain;
For wicked ears are deaf to wisdom’s call, 300
And vengeance strikes whom Heaven has doom’d to
fall.

Once more attend: when she whose power inspires
The thinking mind my soul to vengeance fires;
I give the sign: that instant, from beneath,
Aloft convey the instruments of death, 305
Armour and arms; and if mistrust arise,
Thus veil the truth in plausible disguise.

“These glittering weapons, ere he sail’d to Troy,
Ulysses view’d with stern heroic joy;
Then, beaming o’er the illumined wall they shone;
Now dust dishonours, all their lustre gone. 311
I bear them hence, (so Jove my soul inspires,)
From the pollution of the fuming fires;
Lest when the bowl inflames, in vengeful mood
Ye rush to arms, and stain the feast with blood: 315

Oft ready swords in luckless hour incite
The hand of wrath, and arm it for the fight.

“Such be the plea, and by the plea deceive :
For Jove infatuates all, and all believe.
Yet leave for each of us a sword to wield, 320
A pointed javelin, and a fenciful shield.
But by my blood that in thy bosom glows,
By that regard a son his father owes ;
The secret, that thy father lives, retain
Lock'd in thy bosom from the household train ; 325
Hide it from all ; ev'n from Eumæus hide,
From my dear father, and my dearer bride.
One care remains, to note the royal few
Whose faith yet lasts among the menial crew ;
And noting, ere we rise in vengeance, prove 330
Who loves his prince ; for sure you merit love.”

To whom the youth : “To emulate I aim
The brave and wise, and my great father's fame.
But reconsider, since the wisest err,
Vengeance resolved, 'tis dangerous to defer. 335
What length of time must we consume in vain,
'Too curious to explore the menial train ?
While the proud foes, industrious to destroy
Thy wealth, in riot the delay enjoy.
Suffice it in this exigence alone 340
To mark the damsels that attend the throne :
Dispersed the youth reside ; their faith to prove
Jove grants henceforth, if thou hast spoke from Jove.”

While in debate they waste the hours away,
The associates of the prince repass'd the bay : 345
With speed they guide the vessel to the shores ;
With speed debarking land the naval stores ;
Then, faithful to their charge, to Clytius bear,
And trust the presents to his friendly care.
Swift to the queen a herald flies to impart 350
Her son's return, and ease a parent's heart ;
Lest a sad prey to ever-musing cares,
Pale grief destroy what time a while forbears.

The uncautious herald with impatience burns,
And cries aloud, "Thy son, oh queen, returns." 355
Eumæus sage approach'd the imperial throne,
And breathed his mandate to her ear alone,
Then measured back the way: the suitor band,
Stung to the soul, abash'd, confounded stand;
And issuing from the dome, before the gate, 360
With clouded looks, a pale assembly sat.

At length Eurymachus: "Our hopes are vain;
Telemachus in triumph sails the main.
Haste, rear the mast, the swelling shroud display;
Haste, to our ambush'd friends the news convey!"
Scarce had he spoke, when, turning to the strand,
Amphinomus survey'd the associate band;
Full to the bay within the winding shores
With gather'd sails they stood, and lifted oars.
"Oh friends!" he cried, elate with rising joy, 370
"See to the port secure the vessel fly!
Some god has told them, or themselves survey
The bark escaped, and measure back their way."

Swift at the word descending to the shores,
They moor the vessel and unlade the stores: 375
Then moving from the strand, apart they sat,
And full and frequent form'd a dire debate.

"Lives then the boy? he lives," Antinous cries,
"The care of gods and favourite of the skies.
All night we watch'd, till with her orient wheels 380
Aurora flamed above the eastern hills,
And from the lofty brow of rocks by day
Took in the ocean with a broad survey:
Yet safe he sails! the powers celestial give
To shun the hidden snares of death, and live. 385
But die he shall, and thus condemn'd to bleed,
Be now the scene of instant death decreed.
Hope ye success? undaunted crush the foe.
Is he not wise? know this, and strike the blow.
Wait ye, till he to arms in council draws 390
The Greeks, averse too justly to our cause?"

Strike, ere, the states convened, the foe betray
 Our murderous ambush on the watery way.
 Or choose ye vagrant from their rage to fly,
 Outcasts of earth, to breathe an unknown sky? 395
 The brave prevent misfortune; then be brave,
 And bury future danger in his grave.
 Returns he? ambush'd we'll his walk invade,
 Or where he hides in solitude and shade;
 And give the palace to the queen a dower, 400
 Or him she blesses in the bridal hour.
 But if submissive you resign the sway,
 Slaves to a boy, go flatter and obey.
 Retire we instant to our native reign,
 Nor be the wealth of kings consumed in vain; 405
 Then wed whom choice approves: the queen be given
 To some bless'd prince, the prince decreed by
 Heaven."

Abash'd, the suitor train his voice attends;
 Till from his throne Amphinomus ascends,
 Who o'er Dulichium stretch'd his spacious reign,
 A land of plenty, bless'd with every grain: 411
 Chief of the numbers who the queen address'd,
 And though displeasing, yet displeasing least.
 Soft were his words; his actions wisdom sway'd;
 Graceful a while he paused, then mildly said: 415
 "Oh friends, forbear! and be the thought withstood:
 'Tis horrible to shed imperial blood!
 Consult we first the all-seeing powers above,
 And the sure oracles of righteous Jove.
 If they assent, ev'n by this hand he dies; 420
 If they forbid, I war not with the skies."

He said: the rival train his voice approved,
 And rising instant to the palace moved.
 Arrived, with wild tumultuous noise they sat,
 Recumbent on the shining thrones of state. 425
 Then Medon, conscious of their dire debates,
 The murderous counsel to the queen relates.
 Touch'd at the dreadful story, she descends:
 Her hasty steps a damsel train attends.

Full where the dome its shining valves expands, 430
Sudden before the rival powers she stands;
And, veiling, decent, with a modest shade
Her cheek, indignant to Antinous said:

“ Oh void of faith ! of all bad men the worst !
Renown'd for wisdom, by the abuse accursed ! 435
Mistaking fame proclaims thy generous mind ;
Thy deeds denote thee of the basest kind.
Wretch ! to destroy a prince that friendship gives,
While in his guest his murderer he receives ;
Nor dread superior Jove, to whom belong 440
The cause of suppliants, and revenge of wrong.
Hast thou forgot, ungrateful as thou art,
Who saved thy father with a friendly part ?
Lawless he ravaged with his martial powers
The Taphian pirates on Thesprotia's shores ; 445
Enraged, his life, his treasures they demand ;
Ulysses saved him from the avenger's hand.
And wouldst thou evil for his good repay ?
His bed dishonour, and his house betray ?
Afflict his queen, and with a murderous hand 450
Destroy his heir ?—but cease, 'tis I command.”

“ Far hence those fears,” Eurymachus replied,
“ Oh prudent princess ! bid thy soul confide.
Breathes there a man who dares that hero slay,
While I behold the golden light of day ? 455
No : by the righteous powers of heaven I swear,
His blood in vengeance smokes upon my spear.
Ulysses, when my infant days I led,
With wine sufficed me, and with dainties fed :
My generous soul abhors the ungrateful part, 460
And my friend's son lives dearest to my heart.
Then fear no mortal arm ; if Heaven destroy,
We must resign ; for man is born to die.”

Thus smooth he ended, yet his death conspired :
Then sorrowing, with sad step the queen retired, 465
With streaming eyes, all comfortless deplored,
Touch'd with the dear remembrance of her lord :

Nor ceased till Pallas bid her sorrows fly,
And in soft slumber seal'd her flowing eye.

And now Eumæus, at the evening hour, 470
Came late returning to his sylvan bower.

Ulysses and his son had dress'd with art
A yearling boar, and gave the gods their part,
Holy repast ! That instant from the skies
The martial goddess to Ulysses flies : 475

She waves her golden wand, and reassumes
From every feature every grace that blooms ;
At once his vestures change ; at once she sheds
Age o'er his limbs, that tremble as he treads :
Lest to the queen the swain with transport fly, 480
Unable to contain the unruly joy.

When near he drew, the prince breaks forth : " Pro-
claim

What tidings, friends ! what speaks the voice of fame ?
Say, if the suitors measure back the main,
Or still in ambush thirst for blood in vain ?" 485

" Whether," he cries, " they measure back the flood,
Or still in ambush thirst in vain for blood,
Escaped my care : where lawless suitors sway,
'Thy mandate borne, my soul disdain'd to stay.

But from the Hermæan height I cast a view, 490
Where to the port a bark high-bounding flew ;
Her freight a shining band : with martial air
Each poised his shield, and each advanced his spear :
And, if aright these searching eyes survey,
The eluded suitors stem the watery way." 495

The prince, well pleased to disappoint their wiles,
Steals on his sire a glance, and secret smiles.

And now, a short repast prepared, they fed
Till the keen rage of craving hunger fled :
Then to repose withdrawn, apart they lay, 500
And in soft sleep forgot the cares of day.

BOOK XVII.

ARGUMENT.

TELEMACHUS, returning to the city, relates to Penelope the sum of his travels—Ulysses is conducted by Eumæus to the palace, where his old dog Argus acknowledges his master, after an absence of twenty years, and dies with joy—Eumæus returns into the country, and Ulysses remains among the suitors, whose behaviour is described.

Soon as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
Sprinkled with roseate light the dewy lawn,
In haste the prince arose, prepared to part;
His hand impatient grasps the pointed dart;
Fair on his feet the polish'd sandals shine, 5
And thus he greets the master of the swine:

“ My friend, adieu ! let this short stay suffice ;
I haste to meet my mother's longing eyes,
And end her tears, her sorrows, and her sighs.
But thou, attentive, what we order heed : 10
This hapless stranger to the city lead :
By public bounty let him there be fed,
And bless the hand that stretches forth the bread.
To wipe the tears from all afflicted eyes,
My will may covet, but my power denies. 15
If this raise anger in the stranger's thought,
The pain of anger punishes the fault :
The very truth I undisguised declare ;
For what so easy as to be sincere ! ”

To this Ulysses : “ What the prince requires 20
Of swift removal, seconds my desires.
To want like mine the peopled town can yield
More hopes of comfort than the lonely field :

Nor fits my age to till the labour'd lands,
 Or stoop to tasks a rural lord demands. 25
 Adieu! but since this ragged garb can bear
 So ill the inclemencies of morning air,
 A few hours space permit me here to stay;
 My steps Eumæus shall to town convey,
 With riper beams when Phœbus warms the day." 30

Thus he: nor aught Telemachus replied,
 But left the mansion with a lofty stride:
 Schemes of revenge his pondering breast elate,
 Revolving deep the suitors' sudden fate.
 Arriving now before the imperial hall, 35
 He props his spear against the pillar'd wall;
 'Then like a lion o'er the threshold bounds;
 The marble pavement with his step resounds:
 His eye first glanced where Euryclea spreads
 With furry spoils of beasts the splendid beds: 40
 She saw, she wept, she ran with eager pace,
 And reach'd her master with a long embrace.
 All crowded round the family appears
 With wild entrancement, and ecstatic tears.
 Swift from above descends the royal fair, 45
 (Her beauteous cheeks the blush of Venus wear,
 Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air,)
 Hangs o'er her son, in his embraces dies;
 Rains kisses on his neck, his face, his eyes:
 Few words she spoke, though much she had to say;
 And scarce those few, for tears, could force their
 way. 51

"Light of my eyes! he comes! unhop'd for joy!
 Has heaven from Pylos brought my lovely boy?
 So snatch'd from all our cares! Tell, hast thou
 known

Thy father's fate, and tell me all thy own." 55

"Oh dearest! most revered of woman kind!
 Cease with those tears to melt a manly mind,"
 Replied the prince; "nor be our fates deplored,
 From death and treason to thy arms restored.

Go bathè, and, robed in white, ascend the towers; 60
 With all thy handmaids thank the immortal powers;
 To every god vow hecatombs to bleed,
 And call Jove's vengeance on their guilty deed.
 While to the assembled council I repair;
 A stranger sent by Heaven attends me there; 65
 My new accepted guest I haste to find,
 Now to Peiræus' honour'd charge consign'd."

The matron heard, nor was his word in vain.
 She bathed; and robed in white, with all her train,
 To every god vow'd hecatombs to bleed, 70
 And call'd Jove's vengeance on the guilty deed.
 Arm'd with his lance, the prince then pass'd the
 gate;

Two dogs behind, a faithful guard, await;
 Pallas his form with grace divine improves:
 The gazing crowd admires him as he moves: 75
 Him, gathering round, the haughty suitors greet
 With semblance fair, but inward deep deceit.
 Their false addresses generous he denied,
 Pass'd on, and sat by faithful Mentor's side;
 With Antiphus, and Halitherses sage: 80

(His father's counsellors, revered for age.)
 Of his own fortunes, and Ulysses' fame,
 Much ask'd the seniors; till Peiræus came.
 The stranger guest pursued him close behind;
 Whom when Telemachus beheld, he join'd. 85
 He (when Peiræus ask'd for slaves to bring
 The gifts and treasures of the Spartan king)
 Thus thoughtful answer'd: "Those we shall not
 move,

Dark and unconscious of the will of Jove:
 We know not yet the full event of all: 90
 Stabb'd in his palace if your prince must fall,
 Us, and our house, if treason must o'erthrow,
 Better a friend possess them than a foe;
 If death to these, and vengeance Heaven decree,
 Riches are welcome then, not else, to me. 95

Till then, retain the gifts." The hero said,
 And in his hand the willing stranger led.
 Then disarray'd, the shining bath they sought,
 With unguents smooth, of polish'd marble wrought;
 Obedient handmaids with assistant toil 100
 Supply the limpid wave, and fragrant oil:
 Then o'er their limbs refulgent robes they threw
 And fresh from bathing to their seats withdrew.
 The golden ewer a nymph attendant brings,
 Replenish'd from the pure translucent springs; 105
 With copious streams that golden ewer supplies
 A silver laver of capacious size.

They wash: the table, in fair order spread,
 Is piled with viands and the strength of bread.
 Full opposite, before the folding gate, 110
 The pensive mother sits in humble state;
 Lowly she sat, and with dejected view
 The fleecy threads her ivory fingers drew.
 The prince and stranger shared the genial feast,
 Till now the rage of thirst and hunger ceased. 115

When thus the queen: "My son! my only friend!
 Say, to my mournful couch shall I ascend?
 (The couch deserted now a length of years;
 The couch for ever water'd with my tears;)
 Say, wilt thou not, (ere yet the suitor crew 120
 Return, and riot shakes our walls anew,)
 Say, wilt thou not the least account afford?
 The least glad tidings of my absent lord?"

To her the youth: "We reach'd the Pylian plains,
 Where Nestor, shepherd of his people, reigns. 125
 All arts of tenderness to him are known,
 Kind to Ulysses' race as to his own;
 No father with a fonder grasp of joy
 Strains to his bosom his long absent boy.
 But all unknown, if yet Ulysses breathe, 130
 Or glide a spectre in the realms beneath;
 For farther search, his rapid steeds transport
 My lengthen'd journey to the Spartan court.

There Argive Helen I beheld, whose charms
 (So Heaven decreed) engaged the great in arms. 135
 My cause of coming told, he thus rejoin'd ;
 And still his words live perfect in my mind :

“ ‘ Heavens ! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
 An absent hero’s nuptial joys profane !

So with her young, amid the woodland shades, 140

A timorous hind the lion’s court invades,

Leaves in that fatal lair her tender fawns,

And climbs the cliff, or feeds along the lawns ;

Meantime returning, with remorseless sway

The monarch savage rends the panting prey : 145

With equal fury, and with equal fame,

Shall great Ulysses reassert his claim.

Oh Jove ! supreme ! whom men and gods revere ;

And thou whose lustre gilds the rolling sphere !

With power congenial join’d, propitious aid 150

The chief adopted by the martial maid !

Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,

As when, contending on the Lesbian shore,

His prowess Philomelides confess’d,

And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor bless’d : 155

Then soon the invaders of his bed and throne,

Their love presumptuous shall by death atone.

Now what you question of my ancient friend,

With truth I answer ; thou the truth attend.

Learn what I heard the seaborn seer relate, 160

Whose eye can pierce the dark recess of fate.

Sole in an isle, imprison’d by the main,

The sad survivor of his numerous train,

Ulysses-lies : detain’d by magic charms,

And press’d unwilling in Calypso’s arms. 165

No sailors there, no vessels to convey,

Nor oars to cut the immeasurable way.’

This told Atrides, and he told no more.

‘ Then safe I voyaged to my native shore.’”

He ceased ; nor made the pensive queen reply, 170
 But droop’d her head, and drew a secret sigh.

When Theoclymenus the seer began:
 "Oh suffering consort of the suffering man!
 What human knowledge could, those kings might
 tell;

But I the secrets of high Heaven reveal. 175

Before the first of gods be this declared,
 Before the board whose blessing we have shared;
 Witness the genial rites, and witness all
 This house holds sacred in her ample wall!
 Ev'n now, this instant, great Ulysses, laid 180

At rest, or wandering in his country's shade,
 Their guilty deeds, in hearing, and in view,
 Secret revolves; and plans the vengeance due.
 Of this sure auguries the gods bestow'd,
 When first our vessel anchor'd in your road." 185

"Succeed those omens, Heaven!" the queen re-
 join'd,

"So shall our bounties speak a grateful mind;
 And every envied happiness attend
 The man who calls Penelope his friend."

Thus communed they: while in the marble court
 (Scene of their insolence) the lords resort; 191
 Athwart the spacious square each tries his art,
 To whirl the disk or aim the missile dart.

Now did the hour of sweet repast arrive,
 And from the field the victim flocks they drive: 195
 Medon the herald, (one who pleased them best,
 And honour'd with a portion of their feast,)
 To bid the banquet, interrupts their play:
 Swift to the hall they haste; aside they lay
 Their garments, and succinct the victims slay. 200
 Then sheep, and goats, and bristly porkers bled,
 And the proud steer was o'er the marble spread.

While thus the copious banquet they provide,
 Along the road conversing side by side,
 Proceed Ulysses and the faithful swain: 205
 When thus Eumæus, generous and humane:

"To town, observant of our lord's behest,
 Now let us speed; my friend, no more my guest!

Yet like myself I wish thee here preferr'd,
Guard of the flock, or keeper of the herd. 210

But much to raise my master's wrath I fear!

The wrath of princes ever is severe.

Then heed his will, and be our journey made
While the broad beams of Phœbus are display'd,
Or ere brown evening spreads her chilly shade." 215

"Just thy advice," the prudent chief rejoind,

"And such as suits the dictate of my mind.

Lead on: but help me to some staff to stay

My feeble step, since rugged is the way."

Across his shoulders then the scrip he flung, 220
Wide-patch'd, and fasten'd by a twisted thong.

A staff Eumæus gave. Along the way

Cheerly they fare: behind the keepers stay;

These with their watchful dogs (a constant guard)

Supply his absence, and attend the herd. 225

And now his city strikes the monarch's eyes,

Alas! how changed! a man of miseries;

Propp'd on a staff, a beggar old and bare,

In rags dishonest fluttering with the air!

Now pass'd the rugged road, they journey down 230

The cavern'd way descending to the town,

Where, from the rock, with liquid drops distils

A limpid fount; that spread in parting rills

Its current thence to serve the city brings;

A useful work, adorn'd by ancient kings. 235

Neritus, Ithacus, Polyctor, there,

In sculptured stone immortalized their care,

In marble urns received it from above,

And shaded with a green surrounding grove;

Where silver alders, in high arches twined, 240

Drink the cool stream, and tremble to the wind.

Beneath, sequester'd to the nymphs, is seen

A mossy altar, deep imbower'd in green;

Where constant vows by travellers are paid,

And holy horrors solemnize the shade. 245

Here with his goats (not vow'd to sacred flame,
But pamper'd luxury) Melanthius came:

Two grooms attend him. With an envious look
He eyed the stranger, and imperious spoke :

“ The good old proverb how this pair fulfil ! 250

One rogue is usher to another still.

Heaven with a secret principle endued

Mankind, to seek their own similitude.

Where goes the swineherd with that ill-look'd guest ?

That giant glutton, dreadful at a feast ! 255

Full many a post have those broad shoulders worn,

From every great man's gate repulsed with scorn ;

To no brave prize aspired the worthless swain,

'Twas but for scraps he ask'd, and ask'd in vain.

To beg, than work, he better understands ; 260

Or we perhaps might take him off thy hands.

For any office could the slave be good,

To cleanse the fold, or help the kids to food,

If any labour those big joints could learn,

Some whey, to wash his bowels, he might earn. 265

To cringe, to whine, his idle hands to spread,

Is all, by which that graceless maw is fed.

Yet hear me ! if thy impudence but dare

Approach yon walls, I prophesy thy fare :

Dearly, full dearly, shalt thou buy thy bread 270

With many a footstool thundering at thy head.”

He thus : nor insolent of word alone,

Spurn'd with his rustic heel his king unknown ;

Spurn'd, but not moved : he like a pillar stood,

Nor stirr'd an inch, contemptuous, from the road : 275

Doubtful, or with his staff to strike him dead,

Or greet the pavement with his worthless head.

Short was that doubt ; to quell his rage inured,

The hero stood self-conquer'd, and endured.

But hateful of the wretch, Eumæus heaved 280

His hands obtesting, and this prayer conceived :

“ Daughters of Jove ! who from the ethereal bowers

Descend to swell the springs, and feed the flowers !

Nymphs of this fountain ! to whose sacred names

Our rural victims mount in blazing flames ! 285

To whom Ulysses' piety preferr'd
The yearly firstlings of his flock and herd;
Succeed my wish, your votary restore:
Oh, be some god his convoy to our shore!
Due pains shall punish then this slave's offence, 290
And humble all his airs of insolence,
Who, proudly stalking, leaves the herds at large,
Commences courtier, and neglects his charge."

"What mutters he?" Melanthius sharp rejoins;
"This crafty miscreant big with dark designs? 295
The day shall come—nay, 'tis already near—
When, slave! to sell thee at a price too dear,
Must be my care; and hence transport thee o'er,
A load and scandal to this happy shore.
Oh! that as surely great Apollo's dart, 300
Or some brave suitor's sword, might pierce the heart
Of the proud son, as that we stand this hour
In lasting safety from the father's power!"

So spoke the wretch, but, shunning further fray,
Turn'd his proud step, and left them on their way. 305
Straight to the feastful palace he repair'd,
Familiar enter'd, and the banquet shared;
Beneath Eurymachus, his patron lord,
He took his place, and plenty heap'd the board.

Meantime they heard, soft circling in the sky, 310
Sweet airs ascend, and heavenly minstrelsy;
(For Phemius to the lyre attuned the strain;)
Ulysses harken'd, then address'd the swain:

"Well may this palace admiration claim,
Great, and respondent to the master's fame! 315
Stage above stage the imperial structure stands,
Holds the chief honours, and the town commands:
High walls and battlements the court enclose,
And the strong gates defy a host of foes.
Far other cares its dwellers now employ; 320
The throng'd assembly and the feast of joy:
I see the smokes of sacrifice aspire,
And hear (what graces every feast) the lyre."

Then thus Eumæus: "Judge we which were best;
 Amid yon revellers a sudden guest 325
 Choose you to mingle, while behind I stay?
 Or I first entering introduce the way?
 Wait for a space without, but wait not long;
 'This is the house of violence and wrong:
 Some rude insult thy reverend age may bear, 330
 For like their lawless lords the servants are."

"Just is, oh friend! thy caution, and address'd,"
 Replied the chief, "to no unheedful breast;
 The wrongs and injuries of base mankind
 Fresh to my sense, and always in my mind. 335
 The bravely patient to no fortune yields:
 On rolling oceans, and in fighting fields,
 Storms have I pass'd, and many a stern debate;
 And now in humbler scene submit to fate.
 What cannot Want? The best she will expose, 340
 And I am learn'd in all her train of woes;
 She fills with navies, hosts, and loud alarms
 The sea, the land, and shakes the world with arms!"

Thus, near the gates conferring as they drew,
 Argus, the dog, his ancient master knew; 345
 He, not unconscious of the voice and tread,
 Lifts to the sound his ear, and rears his head;
 Bred by Ulysses, nourish'd at his board,
 But, ah! not fated long to please his lord!
 To him, his swiftness and his strength were vain; 350
 The voice of glory call'd him o'er the main.
 Till then in every sylvan chase renown'd,
 With Argus, Argus rung the woods around:
 With him the youth pursued the goat or fawn,
 Or traced the mazy leveret o'er the lawn. 355
 Now left to man's ingratitude he lay,
 Unhoused, neglected in the public way;
 And where on heaps the rich manure was spread,
 Obscene with reptiles, took his sordid bed.

He knew his lord; he knew, and strove to meet;
 In vain he strove, to crawl, and kiss his feet; 361

Yet (all he could) his tail, his ears, his eyes,
Salute his master, and confess his joys.
Soft pity touch'd the mighty master's soul ;
Adown his cheek a tear unbidden stole, 365
Stole unperceived : he turn'd his head and dried
The drop humane : then thus impassion'd cried :

“ What noble beast in this abandon'd state
Lies here all helpless at Ulysses' gate ?
His bulk and beauty speak no vulgar praise : 370
If, as he seems, he was in better days.
Some care his age deserves ; or was he prized
For worthless beauty ? therefore now despised :
Such dogs and men there are, mere things of state,
And always cherish'd by their friends, the great.” 375

“ Not Argus so,” Eumæus thus rejoin'd,
“ But served a master of a nobler kind,
Who never, never shall behold him more !
Long, long since perish'd on a distant shore ! 379
Oh, had you seen him, vigorous, bold, and young,
Swift as a stag, and as a lion strong ;
Him no fell savage on the plain withstood,
None 'scaped him bosom'd in the gloomy wood ;
His eye how piercing, and his scent how true,
To wind the vapour in the tainted dew ! 385
Such, when Ulysses left his natal coast :
Now years unnerve him, and his lord is lost !
The women keep the generous creature bare,
A sleek and idle race is all their care ;
The master gone, the servants what restrains ? 390
Or dwells humanity where riot reigns ?
Jove fix'd it certain, that whatever day
Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.”

This said, the honest herdsman strode before :
The musing monarch pauses at the door : 395
The dog, whom fate had granted to behold
His lord, when twenty tedious years had roll'd,
Takes a last look, and, having seen him, dies ;
So closed for ever faithful Argus' eyes !

And now Telemachus, the first of all, 400
Observed Eumæus entering in the hall;
Distant he saw, across the shady dome;
Then gave a sign, and beckon'd him to come:
There stood an empty seat, where late was placed,
In order due, the steward of the feast, 405
(Who now was busied carving round the board,)
Eumæus took, and placed it near his lord.
Before him instant was the banquet spread,
And the bright basket piled with loaves of bread.

Next came Ulysses lowly at the door, 410
A figure despicable, old, and poor,
In squalid vests, with many a gaping rent,
Propp'd on a staff, and trembling as he went.
Then, resting on the threshold of the gate,
Against a cypress pillar lean'd his weight; 415
(Smooth'd by the workman to a polish'd plain;)
The thoughtful son beheld, and call'd his swain:

“These viands, and this bread, Eumæus! bear,
And let yon mendicant our plenty share;
Then let him circle round the suitors' board, 420
And try the bounty of each gracious lord.
Bold let him ask, encouraged thus by me:
How ill, alas! do want and shame agree!”

His lord's command the faithful servant bears:
The seeming beggar answers with his prayers: 425
“Bless'd be Telemachus! in every deed
Inspire him, Jove! in every wish succeed!”
This said, the portion from his son convey'd
With smiles receiving on his scrip he laid.
Long as the minstrel swept the sounding wire, 430
He fed, and ceased when silence held the lyre.
Soon as the suitors from the banquet rose,
Minerva prompts the man of mighty woes
To tempt their bounties with a suppliant's art,
And learn the generous from the ignoble heart; 435
(Not but his soul, resentful as humane,
Dooms to full vengeance all the offending train;)

With speaking eyes, and voice of plaintive sound,
Humble he moves, imploring all around.
The proud feel pity, and relief bestow, 440
With such an image touch'd of human wo;
Inquiring all, their wonder they confess,
And eye the man, majestic in distress.

While thus they gaze and question with their
eyes,
The bold Melanthius to their thought replies: 445
“ My lords ! this stranger of gigantic port
The good Eumæus usher'd to your court.
Full well I mark'd the features of his face,
Though all unknown his clime, or noble race.”

“ And is this present, swineherd, of thy hand ? 450
Bring'st thou these vagrants to infest the land ?”

(Returns Antinous, with retorted eye ;)
“ Objects uncouth, to check the genial joy.
Enough of these our court already grace,
Of giant stomach, and of famish'd face. 455
Such guests Eumæus to his country brings,
To share our feast, and lead the life of kings.”

To whom the hospitable swain rejoind :
“ Thy passion, prince, belies thy knowing mind.
Who calls, from distant nations to his own, 460
The poor distinguish'd by their wants alone ?
Round the wide world are sought those men divine
Who public structures raise, or who design ;
Those to whose eyes the gods their ways reveal,
Or bless with salutary arts to heal ; 465
But chief to poets such respect belongs,
By rival nations courted for their songs ;
These states invite, and mighty kings admire,
Wide as the sun displays his vital fire.

It is not so with want ! how few that feed 470
A wretch unhappy, merely for his need !

Unjust to me, and all that serve the state,
To love Ulysses is to raise thy hate.
For me, suffice the approbation won
Of my great mistress, and her godlike son.” 475

To him Telemachus: "No more incense
The man by nature prone to insolence:
Injurious minds just answers but provoke;"
Then turning to Antinous, thus he spoke:
"Thanks to thy care! whose absolute command 480
Thus drives the stranger from our court and land.
Heaven bless its owner with a better mind!
From envy free, to charity inclined.
This both Penelope and I afford:
Then, prince! be bounteous of Ulysses' board. 485
To give another's is thy hand so slow?
So much more sweet to spoil than to bestow?"
"Whence, great Telemachus, this lofty strain?"
Antinous cries with insolent disdain;
"Portions like mine if every suitor gave, 490
Our walls this twelvemonth should not see the
slave."

He spoke; and lifting high above the board
His ponderous footstool, shook it at his lord.
The rest with equal hand conferr'd the bread;
He fill'd his scrip, and to the threshold sped; 495
But first before Antinous stopp'd, and said:
"Bestow, my friend! thou dost not seem the worst
Of all the Greeks, but princelike and the first;
Then, as in dignity, be first in worth,
And I shall praise thee through the boundless earth.
Once I enjoy'd in luxury of state 501
What'er gives man the envied name of great;
Wealth, servants, friends, were mine in better days,
And hospitality was then my praise;
In every sorrowing soul I pour'd delight, 505
And poverty stood smiling in my sight.
But Jove, all-governing, whose only will
Determines fate, and mingles good with ill,
Sent me (to punish my pursuit of gain)
With roving pirates o'er the Egyptian main: 510
By Egypt's silver flood our ships we moor;
Our spies commission'd straight the coast explore;

But impotent of mind, with lawless will
 The country ravage, and the natives kill.
 The spreading clamour to their city flies, 515
 And horse and foot in mingled tumults rise :
 The reddening dawn reveals the hostile fields,
 Horrid with bristly spears, and gleaming shields :
 Jove thunder'd on their side : our guilty head 519
 We turn'd to flight ; the gathering vengeance spread
 On all parts round, and heaps on heaps lay dead.
 Some few the foe in servitude detain ;
 Death ill exchanged for bondage and for pain !
 Unhappy me a Cyprian took aboard,
 And gave to Dmetor, Cyprus' haughty lord : 525
 Hither, to 'scape his chains, my course I steer,
 Still cursed by fortune, and insulted here !"

To whom Antinous thus his rage express'd :
 " What god has plagued us with this gormand guest ?
 Unless at distance, wretch ! thou keep behind, 530
 Another isle, than Cyprus more unkind,
 Another Egypt, shalt thou quickly find.
 From all thou begg'st, a bold audacious slave ;
 Nor all can give so much as thou canst crave.
 Nor wonder I, at such profusion shown ; 535
 Shameless they give, who give what's not their
 own."

The chief, retiring : " Souls, like that in thee,
 Ill suit such forms of grace and dignity.
 Nor will that hand to utmost need afford
 The smallest portion of a wasteful board, 540
 Whose luxury whole patrimonies sweeps,
 Yet starving Want, amid the riot, weeps."

The haughty suitor with resentment burns,
 And, sourly smiling, this reply returns :
 " Take that, ere yet thou quit this princely throng ;
 And dumb for ever be thy slanderous tongue !" 546
 He said, and high the whirling tripod flung.
 His shoulder-blade received the ungentle shock ;
 He stood, and moved not, like a marble rock ;

But shook his thoughtful head, nor more complain'd,
Sedate of soul, his character sustain'd, 551
And inly form'd revenge: then back withdrew;
Before his feet the well-fill'd scrip he threw,
And thus with semblance mild address'd the crew:

“May what I speak your princely minds approve,
Ye peers and rivals in this noble love! 556
Not for the hurt I grieve, but for the cause.
If, when the sword our country's quarrel draws,
Or if, defending what is justly dear,
From Mars impartial some broad wound we bear;
The generous motive dignifies the scar. 561
But for mere want, how hard to suffer wrong!
Want brings enough of other ills along!
Yet, if injustice never be secure,
If fiends revenge, and gods assert the poor, 565
Death shall lay low the proud aggressor's head,
And make the dust Antinous' bridal bed.”

“Peace, wretch! and eat thy bread without of-
fence,”

The suitor cried, “or force shall drag thee hence,
Scourge through the public street, and cast thee
there, 570

A mangled carcass for the hounds to tear.”

His furious deed the general anger moved,
All, ev'n the worst, condemn'd; and some reprov'd..
“Was ever chief for wars like these renown'd?

Ill fits the stranger and the poor to wound. 575

Unbless'd thy hand! if in this low disguise
Wander, perhaps, some inmate of the skies;
They (curious oft of mortal actions) deign
In forms like these to round the earth and main,
Just and unjust recording in their mind, 580
And with sure eyes inspecting all mankind.”

Telemachus, absorb'd in thought severe,
Nourish'd deep anguish, though he shed no tear;
But the dark brow of silent sorrow shook:
While thus his mother to her virgins spoke: 585

“On him and his may the bright god of day
That base, inhospitable blow repay !”

The nurse replies : “If Jove receive my prayer,
Not one survives to breathe to-morrow’s air.”

“All, all are foes, and mischief is their end ; 590
Antinous most to gloomy death a friend,”

Replies the queen : “the stranger begg’d their grace,
And melting pity soften’d every face ;

From every other hand redress he found,
But fell Antinous answer’d with a wound.” 595

Amid her maids thus spoke the prudent queen,
Then bade Eumæus call the pilgrim in.

“Much of the experienced man I long to hear,
If or his certain eye, or listening ear,
Have learn’d the fortunes of my wandering lord.”
Thus she, and good Eumæus took the word. 601

“A private audience if thy grace impart,
The stranger’s words may ease the royal heart.
His sacred eloquence in balm distils,
And the sooth’d heart with secret pleasure fills. 605
Three days have spent their beams, three nights
have run

Their silent journey, since his tale begun,
Unfinish’d yet ; and yet I thirst to hear !
As when some heaven-taught poet charms the ear,
(Suspending sorrow with celestial strain 610
Breathed from the gods to soften human pain.)
Time steals away with unregarded wing,
And the soul hears him, though he cease to sing.

“Ulysses late he saw, on Cretan ground,
(His father’s guest,) for Minos’ birth renown’d. 615
He now but waits the wind, to waft him o’er,
With boundless treasure, from Thesprotia’s shore.”

To this the queen : “The wanderer let me hear,
While yon luxurious race indulge their cheer,
Devour the grazing ox, and browsing goat, 620
And turn my generous vintage down their throat.
For where’s an arm, like thine, Ulysses, strong,
To curb wild riot, and to punish wrong ?”

She spoke. Telemachus then sneezed aloud;
 Constrain'd, his nostril echo'd through the crowd.
 The smiling queen the happy omen bless'd : 626

“So may these impious fall, by fate oppress'd!”
 Then to Eumæus: “Bring the stranger, fly!
 And if my questions meet a true reply,
 Graced with a decent robe he shall retire, 630
 A gift in season which his wants require.”

Thus spoke Penelope. Eumæus flies
 In duteous haste, and to Ulysses cries;
 “The queen invites thee, venerable guest!
 A secret instinct moves her troubled breast, 635
 Of her long-absent lord from thee to gain
 Some light, and soothe her soul's eternal pain.
 If true, if faithful thou, her grateful mind
 Of decent robes a present has design'd;
 So finding favour in the royal eye, 640
 Thy other wants her subjects shall supply.”

“Fair truth alone,” the patient man replied,
 “My words shall dictate, and my lips shall guide.
 To him, to me, one common lot was given,
 In equal woes, alas! involved by Heaven. 645
 Much of his fates I know; but check'd by fear
 I stand; the hand of violence is here:
 Here boundless wrongs the starry skies invade,
 And injured suppliants seek in vain for aid.
 Let for a space the pensive queen attend, 650
 Nor claim my story till the sun descend;
 Then in such robes as suppliants may require,
 Composed and cheerful by the genial fire,
 When loud uproar and lawless riot cease,
 Shall her pleased ear receive my words in peace.”

Swift to the queen returns the gentle swain: 656
 “And say,” she cries, “does fear, or shame, detain
 The cautious stranger? With the begging kind
 Shame suits but ill.” Eumæus thus rejoind:
 “He only asks a more propitious hour, 660
 And shuns (who would not?) wicked men in power;

At evening mild (meet season to confer)
By turns to question, and by turns to hear."

"Whoe'er this guest," the prudent queen replies,
"His every step and every thought is wise. 665
For men like these on earth ye shall not find
In all the miscreant race of human kind."

Thus she. Eumæus all her words attends,
And, parting, to the suitor powers descends;
There seeks Telemachus, and thus apart 670
In whispers breathes the fondness of his heart:

"The time, my lord, invites me to repair
Hence to the lodge; my charge demands my care.
These sons of murder thirst thy life to take;
Oh guard it, guard it, for thy servant's sake!" 675

"Thanks to my friend," he cries; "but now the
hour

Of night draws on, go seek the rural bower:
But first refresh: and at the dawn of day
Hither a victim to the gods convey.
Our life to Heaven's immortal powers we trust, 680
Safe in their care, for Heaven protects the just."

Observant of his voice, Eumæus sat
And fed recumbent on a chair of state.
Then instant rose, and as he moved along,
'Twas riot all amid the suitor throng; 685
They feast, they dance, and raise the mirthful song.
Till now, declining toward the close of day,
The sun obliquely shot his dewy ray.

BOOK XVIII.

ARGUMENT.

The Fight of Ulysses and Irus.

THE beggar Irus insults Ulysses ; the suitors promote the quarrel, in which Irus is worsted, and miserably handled—Penelope descends, and receives the presents of the suitors—The dialogue of Ulysses with Eurymachus.

WHILE fix'd in thought the pensive hero sat,
A mendicant approach'd the royal gate ;
A surly vagrant of the giant kind,
The stain of manhood, of a coward mind :
From feast to feast, insatiate to devour 5
He flew, attendant on the genial hour.
Him on his mother's knees, when babe he lay,
She named Arnæus on his natal day ;
But Irus his associates call'd the boy,
Practised the common messenger to fly ; 10
Irus, a name expressive of the employ.

From his own roof with meditated blows,
He strove to drive the man of mighty woes.
“ Hence, dotard ! hence, and timely speed thy way,
Lest dragg'd in vengeance thou repent thy stay ; 15
See how with nods assent yon princely train !
But honouring age, in mercy I refrain ;
In peace away ! lest if persuasions fail,
This arm with blows more eloquent prevail.”

To whom with stern regard : “ Oh insolence, 20
Indecently to rail without offence !
What bounty gives without a rival share ;
I ask, what harms not thee, to breathe this air :

Alike on alms we both precarious live :
And canst thou envy when the great relieve ? 25
Know from the bounteous heavens all riches flow,
And what man gives, the gods by man bestow ;
Proud as thou art, henceforth no more be proud,
Lest I imprint my vengeance in thy blood ;
Old as I am, should once my fury burn, 30
How wouldst thou fly, nor ev'n in thought return !"

" Mere woman-glutton !" thus the churl replied :
" A tongue so flippant, with a throat so wide !
Why cease I, gods ! to dash those teeth away,
Like some wild boar's, that greedy of his prey 35
Uproots the bearded corn ? Rise, try the fight,
Gird well thy loins, approach, and feel my might :
Sure of defeat, before the peers engage ;
Unequal fight, when youth contends with age !"

Thus in a wordy war their tongues display 40
More fierce intents, preluding to the fray ;
Antinous hears, and in a jovial vein,
Thus with loud laughter to the suitor train :

" This happy day in mirth, my friends, employ,
And lo ! the gods conspire to crown our joy. 45
See ready for the fight, and hand to hand,
Yon surly mendicants contentious stand :
Why urge we not to blows ?" Well pleased they
spring

Swift from their seats, and thickening form a ring.

To whom Antinous : " Lo ! enrich'd with blood,
A kid's well-fatted entrails, (tasteful food,) 51
On glowing embers lie ; on him bestow
The choicest portion who subdues his foe ;
Grant him unrivall'd in these walls to stay,
The sole attendant on the genial day." 55

The lords applaud : Ulysses then with art,
And fears well feign'd, disguised his dauntless heart :

" Worn as I am with age, decay'd with wo ?
Say, is it baseness to decline the foe ?
Hard conflict ! when calamity and age 60
With vigorous youth, unknown to cares, engage !

Yet, fearful of disgrace, to try the day
Imperious hunger bids, and I obey ;
But swear, impartial arbiters of right,
Swear to stand neutral while we cope in fight.” 65

The peers assent : when straight his sacred head
Telemachus upraised, and sternly said :

“ Stranger, if prompted to chastise the wrong
Of this bold insolent, confide, be strong !
The injurious Greek that dares attempt a blow, 70
That instant makes Telemachus his foe ;
And these my friends shall guard the sacred ties
Of hospitality, for they are wise.”

Then, girding his strong loins, the king prepares
To close in combat, and his body bares ; 75
Broad spread his shoulders, and his nervous thighs
By just degrees, like well turn'd columns, rise :
Ample his chest, his arms are round and long,
And each strong joint Minerva knits more strong—
(Attendant on her chief :) the suitor crowd 80
With wonder gaze, and gazing speak aloud :

“ Irus ! alas ! shall Irus be no more ?
Black fate impends, and this the avenging hour !
Gods ! how his nerves a matchless strength pro-
claim,
Swell o'er his well-strung limbs, and brace his
frame !” 85

Then pale with fears, and sickening at the sight,
They dragg'd the unwilling Irus to the fight ;
From his blank visage fled the coward blood,
And his flesh trembled as aghast he stood.

“ Oh that such baseness should disgrace the light !
Oh hide it, death, in everlasting night !” 91
Exclaims Antinous ; “ can a vigorous foe
Meanly decline to combat age and wo ?
But hear me, wretch ! if recreant in the fray
That huge bulk yield this ill-contested day, 95
Instant thou sail'st, to Echetus resign'd ;
A tyrant, fiercest of the tyrant kind,

Who casts thy mangled ears and nose a prey
 'To hungry dogs, and lops the man away.'

While with indignant scorn he sternly spoke, 100
 In every joint the trembling Irus shook.

Now front to front each frowning champion stands,
 And poises high in air his adverse hands.

'The chief yet doubts, or to the shades below
 To fell the giant at one vengeful blow, 105

Or save his life ; and soon his life to save
 The king resolves, for mercy sways the brave.

That instant Irus his huge arm extends,
 Full on his shoulder the rude weight descends :

'The sage Ulysses, fearful to disclose 110
 The hero latent in the man of woes,

Check'd half his might ; yet rising to the stroke,
 His jaw bone dash'd, the crashing jaw bone broke :

Down dropp'd he stupid from the stunning wound ;
 His feet extended, quivering, beat the ground : 115

His mouth and nostrils spout a purple flood ;
 His teeth all shatter'd, rush immix'd with blood.

The peers transported, as outstretch'd he lies,
 With bursts of laughter rend the vaulted skies ;

'Then dragg'd along, all bleeding from the wound :
 His length of carcass trailing prints the ground : 121

Raised on his feet, again he reels, he falls,
 Till propp'd, reclining on the palace walls :

Then to his hand a staff the victor gave,
 And thus with just reproach address'd the slave : 125

" There terrible, affright the dogs, and reign
 A dreaded tyrant o'er the bestial train !

But mercy to the poor and stranger show,
 Lest Heaven in vengeance send some mightier wo."

Scornful he spoke, and o'er his shoulder flung 130
 The broad patch'd scrip ; the scrip in tatters hung

Ill join'd, and knotted to a twisted thong.
 Then, turning short, disdain'd a further stay ;

But to the palace measured back the way.
 There as he rested, gathering in a ring, 135

The peers with smiles address'd their unknown king :

“Stranger, may Jove and all the aerial powers
With every blessing crown thy happy hours!
Our freedom to thy prowess'd arm we owe
From bold intrusion of thy coward foe; 140
Instant the flying sail the slave shall wing
To Echetus, the monster of a king.”

While pleased he hears, Antinous bears the food,
A kid's well fatt'd entrails, rich with blood:
The bread from canisters of shining mould 145
Amphinomus; and wines that laugh in gold:
“And oh!” he mildly cries, “may Heaven display
A beam of glory o'er thy future day!
Alas, the brave too oft is doom'd to bear
The gripes of poverty, and stings of care.” 150

To whom with thought mature the king replies;
“The tongue speaks wisely, when the soul is wise;
Such was thy father! in imperial state,
Great without vice, that oft attends the great:
Nor from the sire art thou, the son, declined; 155
Then hear my words, and grave them in thy mind!
Of all that breathes, or grovelling creeps on earth,
Most man is vain! calamitous by birth:
To-day, with power elate, in strength he blooms;
The haughty creature on that power presumes: 160
Anon from Heaven a sad reverse he feels;
Untaught to bear, 'gainst Heaven the wretch rebels.
For man is changeful, as his bliss or wo;
Too high when prosperous, when distress'd too low.
There was a day, when with the scornful great 165
I swell'd in pomp and arrogance of state;
Proud of the power that to high birth belongs;
And used that power to justify my wrongs.
Then let not man be proud; but firm of mind,
Bear the best humbly, and the worst resign'd; 170
Be dumb when Heaven afflicts! unlike yon train
Of haughty spoilers, insolently vain;
Who make their queen and all her wealth a prey:
But vengeance and Ulysses wing their way.

Oh mayst thou, favour'd by some guardian power,
Far, far be distant in that deathful hour! 176
For sure I am, if stern Ulysses breathe,
These lawless riots end in blood and death."

Then to the gods the rosy juice he pours,
And the drain'd goblet to the chief restores. 180
Stung to the soul, o'ercast with holy dread,
He shook the graceful honours of his head;
His boding mind the future wo forestalls,
In vain! by great Telemachus he falls,
For Pallas seals his doom: all sad he turns 185
To join the peers; resumes his throne, and mourns.

Meanwhile Minerva with instinctive fires
Thy soul, Penelope, from Heaven inspires:
With flattering hopes the suitors to betray,
And seem to meet, yet fly, the bridal day: 190
Thy husband's wonder, and thy son's, to raise:
And crown the mother and the wife with praise.
Then, while the streaming sorrow dims her eyes,
Thus with a transient smile the matron cries:

"Eurynome! to go where riot reigns 195
I feel an impulse, though my soul disdains;
To my loved son the snares of death to show,
And in the traitor friend unmask the foe;
Who, smooth of tongue, in purpose insincere,
Hides fraud in smiles, while death is ambush'd there."

"Go, warn thy son, nor be the warning vain," 201
Replied the sagest of the royal train;
"But bathed, anointed, and adorn'd, descend;
Powerful of charms, bid every grace attend;
The tide of flowing tears a while suppress; 205
Tears but indulge the sorrow, not repress.
Some joy remains: to thee a son is given,
Such as, in fondness, parents ask of Heaven."

"Ah me! forbear," returns the queen, "forbear,
Oh! talk not, talk not of vain beauty's care; 210
No more I bathe, since he no longer sees
Those charms, for whom alone I wish to please.

The day that bore Ulysses from this coast
Blasted the little bloom these cheeks could boast.
But instant bid Autonoe descend, 215
Instant Hippodame our steps attend ;
Ill suits it female virtue, to be seen
Alone, indecent, in the walks of men."

Then while Eurynome the mandate bears,
From heaven Minerva shoots with guardian cares ;
O'er all her senses, as the couch she press'd, 221
She pours a pleasing, deep, and deathlike rest,
With every beauty every feature arms,
Bids her cheeks glow, and lights up all her charms,
In her love-darting eyes awakes the fires ; 225
(Immortal gifts ! to kindle soft desires ;)
From limb to limb an air majestic sheds,
And the pure ivory o'er her bosom spreads.
Such Venus shines, when with a measured bound
She smoothly gliding swims the harmonious round,
When with the graces in the dance she moves, 231
And fires the gazing gods with ardent loves.

Then to the skies her flight Minerva bends,
And to the queen the damsel train descends :
Waked at their steps, her flowing eyes uncloze ; 235
The tears she wipes, and thus renews her woes :
" Howe'er 'tis well, that sleep a while can free
With soft forgetfulness, a wretch like me ;
Oh ! were it given to yield this transient breath,
Send, oh ! Diana, send the sleep of death ! 240
Why must I waste a tedious life in tears,
Nor bury in the silent grave my cares ?
Oh my Ulysses, ever honour'd name !
For thee I mourn till death dissolves my frame."

Thus wailing, slow and sadly she descends, 245
On either hand a damsel train attends ;
Full where the dome its shining valves expands,
Radiant before the gazing peers she stands ;
A veil translucent o'er her brow display'd,
Her beauty seems, and only seems, to shade : 250

Sudden she lightens in their dazzled eyes,
And sudden flames in every bosom rise;
They send their eager souls with every look,
Till silence thus the imperial matron broke :

“ Oh why, my son, why now no more appears 255
That warmth of soul that urged thy younger years ?
Thy riper days no growing worth impart,
A man in stature, still a boy in heart !
Thy well-knit frame unprofitably strong,
Speaks thee a hero, from a hero sprung : 260
But the just gods in vain those gifts bestow,
Oh wise alone in form, and brave in show !
Heavens ! could a stranger feel oppression's hand
Beneath thy roof, and couldst thou tamely stand ?
If thou the stranger's righteous cause decline, 265
His is the sufferance, but the shame is thine.”

To whom, with filial awe, the prince returns :
“ That generous soul with just resentment burns ;
Yet, taught by time, my heart has learn'd to glow
For others' good, and melt for others' wo : 270
But, impotent these riots to repel,
I bear their outrage, though my soul rebel ;
Helpless amid the snares of death I tread,
And numbers leagued in impious union dread ;
But now no crime is theirs, this wrong proceeds 275
From Irus, and the guilty Irus bleeds.
Oh would to Jove ! or her whose arms display
The shield of Jove, or him who rules the day !
That yon proud suitors, who licentious tread
These courts, within these courts like Irus bled : 280
Whose loose head tottering, as with wine oppress'd,
Obliquely drops, and nodding knocks his breast ;
Powerless to move, his staggering feet deny
The coward wretch the privilege to fly.”

Then to the queen Eurymachus replies : 285
“ Oh justly loved, and not more fair than wise !
Should Greece through all her hundred states survey
Thy finish'd charms, all Greece would own thy sway

In rival crowds contest the glorious prize,
Dispeopling realms to gaze upon thy eyes: 290
Oh woman! loveliest of the lovely kind,
In body perfect, and complete in mind."

"Ah me," returns the queen, "when from this
shore

Ulysses sail'd, then beauty was no more!
The gods decreed these eyes no more should keep
Their wonted grace, but only serve to weep. 296
Should he return, whate'er my beauties prove,
My virtues last, my brightest charm is love.
Now, grief, thou all art mine! the gods o'er cast
My soul with woes, that long, ah long must last! 300
Too faithfully my heart retains the day
That sadly tore my royal lord away;
He grasp'd my hand, and, 'Oh my spouse! I leave
'Thy arms,' he cried, 'perhaps to find a grave:
Fame speaks the Trojans bold; they boast the skill
To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill, 306
To dart the spear, and guide the rushing car
With dreadful inroad through the walks of war.
My sentence is gone forth, and 'tis decreed
Perhaps by righteous Heaven that I must bleed! 310
My father, mother, all I trust to thee:
To them, to them transfer the love of me:
But, when my son grows man, the royal sway
Resign, and happy be thy bridal day!"
Such were his words; and Hymen now prepares 315
To light his torch, and give me up to cares;
The afflictive hand of wrathful Jove to bear:
A wretch the most complete that breathes the air!
Fall'n ev'n below the rights to woman due!
Careless to please, with insolence ye woo! 320
The generous lovers, studious to succeed,
Bid their whole herds and flocks in banquets bleed:
By precious gifts the vow sincere display:
You, only you, make her ye love your prey."

Well pleased Ulysses hears his queen deceive 325
The suitor train, and raise a thirst to give:

False hopes she kindles, but those hopes betray,
And promise, yet elude, the bridal day.

While yet she speaks, the gay Antinous cries,
"Offspring of kings, and more than woman wise! 330
'Tis right; 'tis man's prerogative to give,
And custom bids thee without shame receive;
Yet never, never from thy dome we move
Till Hymen lights the torch of spousal love."

The peers despatch'd their heralds to convey 335
The gifts of love; with speed they take the way.
A robe Antinous gives of shining dyes,
The varying hues in gay confusion rise
Rich from the artist's hand! Twelve clasps of gold
Close to the lessening waist the vest infold! 340
Down from the swelling loins the vest unbound
Floats in bright waves redundant o'er the ground.
A bracelet rich with gold, with amber gay,
That shot effulgence like the solar ray,
Eurymachus presents: and ear-rings bright, 345
With triple stars, that cast a trembling light.
Pisander bears a necklace wrought with art:
And every peer, expressive of his heart,
A gift bestows: this done, the queen ascends,
And slow behind her damsel train attends. 350

Then to the dance they form the vocal strain,
Till Hesperus leads forth the starry train;
And now he raises, as the daylight fades,
His golden circlet in the deepening shades:
Three vases heap'd with copious fires display 355
O'er all the palace a fictitious day;
From space to space the torch wide-beaming burns,
And sprightly damsels trim the rays by turns.

To whom the king: "Ill suits your sex to stay
Alone with men! ye modest maids, away! 360
Go, with the queen the spindle guide; or cull
(The partners of her cares) the silver wool;
Be it my task the torches to supply
Ev'n till the morning lamp adorns the sky;

Ev'n till the morning, with unwearied care, 365
Sleepless I watch; for I have learn'd to bear."

Scornful they heard: Melantho, fair and young,
(Melantho, from the loins of Dolius sprung,
Who with the queen her years an infant led,
With the soft fondness of a daughter bred,) 370
Chiefly derides: regardless of the cares
Her queen endures, polluted joys she shares
Nocturnal with Eurymachus; with eyes
That speak disdain, the wanton thus replies:

"Oh! whither wanders thy distemper'd brain, 375
Thou bold intruder on a princely train?
Hence to the vagrants' rendezvous repair;
Or shun in some black forge the midnight air.
Proceeds this boldness from a turn of soul,
Or flows licentious from the copious bowl? 380
Is it that vanquish'd Irus swells thy mind?
A foe may meet thee of a braver kind,
Who, shortening with a storm of blows thy stay,
Shall send thee howling all in blood away!"

To whom with frowns: "Oh impudent in wrong!
Thy lord shall curb that insolence of tongue; 386
Know, to Telemachus I tell the offence;
The scourge, the scourge shall lash thee into sense."

With conscious shame they hear the stern rebuke,
Nor longer durst sustain the sovereign look. 390
Then to the servile task the monarch turns
His royal hands: each torch refulgent burns
With added day: meanwhile in useful mood,
Absorbed in thought, on vengeance fix'd he stood.
And now the martial maid, by deeper wrongs 395
To rouse Ulysses, points the suitors' tongues:
Scornful of age, to taunt the virtuous man,
Thoughtless and gay, Eurymachus began.

"Hear me," he cries, "confederates and friends;
Some god; no doubt, this stranger kindly sends; 400
The shining baldness of his head survey,
It aids our torchlight, and reflects the ray."

Then to the king that levell'd haughty Troy:
 "Say, if large hire can tempt thee to employ
 Those hands in work; to tend the rural trade, 405
 To dress the walk, and form the imbowering shade?
 So food and raiment constant will I give:
 But idly thus thy soul prefers to live,
 And starve by strolling, not by work to thrive."

To whom incensed: "Should we, oh prince, en-
 gage 410

In rival tasks beneath the burning rage
 Of summer suns; were both constrain'd to wield
 Foodless the scythe along the burden'd field;
 Or should we labour while the ploughshare wounds,
 With steers of equal strength, the allotted grounds;
 Beneath my labours, how thy wondering eyes 416
 Might see the sable field at once arise!

Should Jove dire war unloose, with spear and shield,
 And nodding helm, I tread the ensanguined field,
 Fierce in the van: then wouldst thou, wouldst thou—
 say— 420

Misname me glutton, in that glorious day?
 No, thy ill-judging thoughts the brave disgrace;
 'Tis thou injurious art, not I am base.
 Proud to seem brave among a coward train!
 But know, thou art not valorous, but vain. 425
 Gods! should the stern Ulysses rise in might,
 These gates would seem too narrow for thy flight."

While yet he speaks, Eurymachus replies,
 With indignation flashing from his eyes:
 "Slave! I with justice might deserve the wrong,
 Should I not punish that opprobrious tongue. 431
 Irreverent to the great, and uncontroll'd,
 Art thou from wine, or innate folly, bold?
 Perhaps, these outrages from Irus flow,
 A worthless triumph o'er a worthless foe!" 435

He said, and with full force a footstool threw:
 Whirl'd from his arm, with erring rage it flew:
 Ulysses, cautious of the vengeful foe,
 Stoops to the ground, and disappoints the blow.

Not so a youth who deals the goblet round, 440
Full on his shoulder it inflicts a wound :
Dash'd from his hand the sounding goblet flies,
He shrieks, he reels, he falls, and breathless lies.
Then wild uproar and clamour mount the sky,
Till mutual thus the peers indignant cry : 445

“ Oh had this stranger sunk to realms beneath,
To the black realms of darkness and of death,
Ere yet he trod these shores ! to strife he draws
Peer against peer ; and what the weighty cause ?
A vagabond ! for him the great destroy, 450
In vile ignoble jars, the feast of joy.”

To whom the stern Telemachus uprose :
“ Gods ! what wild folly from the goblet flows !
Whence this unguarded openness of soul,
But from the license of the copious bowl ? 455
Or Heaven delusion sends : but hence, away !
Force I forbear, and without force obey.”

Silent, abash'd, they hear the stern rebuke,
Till thus Amphinomus the silence broke :
“ True are his words, and he whom truth offends,
Not with Telemachus, but truth contends : 461
Let not the hand of violence invade
The reverend stranger, or the spotless maid :
Retire we hence ; but crown with rosy wine
The flowing goblet to the powers divine ! 465
Guard he his guest beneath whose roof he stands :
This justice, this the social rite demands.”

The peers assent ; the goblet Mulius crown'd
With purple juice, and bore in order round ;
Each peer successive his libation pours 470
To the bless'd gods who fill the aerial bowers ;
Then swill'd with wine, with noise the crowds obey,
And rushing forth tumultuous, reel away.

BOOK XIX.

ARGUMENT.

The discovery of Ulysses to Euryclea.

ULYSSES and his son remove the weapons out of the armory—Ulysses, in conversation with Penelope, gives a fictitious account of his adventures; then assures her he had formerly entertained her husband in Crete; and describes exactly his person and dress; affirms to have heard of him in Phæacia and Thesprotia, and that his return is certain, and within a month—He then goes to bathe, and is attended by Euryclea, who discovers him to be Ulysses by the scar on his leg, which he formerly received in hunting the wild boar on Parnassus—The poet inserts a digression, relating that accident, with all its particulars.

CONSULTING secret with the blue-eyed maid,
Still in the dome divine Ulysses staid;
Revenge mature for act inflamed his breast;
And thus the son the fervent sire address'd:
 "Instant convey those steely stores of war 5
To distant rooms, disposed with secret care:
The cause demanded by the suitor train,
To sooth their fears, a specious reason feign:
Say, since Ulysses left his natal coast,
Obscene with smoke, their beamy lustre lost, 10
His arms deform the roof they wont adorn:
From the glad walls inglorious lumber torn.
Suggest, that Jove the peaceful thought inspired,
Lest, they by sight of swords to fury fired,
Dishonest wounds, or violence of soul, 15
Defame the bridal feast and friendly bowl."
The prince obedient to the sage command,
To Euryclea thus: "The female band

In their apartments keep ; secure the doors ;
These swarthy arms among the covert stores 20
Are seemlier hid ; my thoughtless youth they blame,
Imbrown'd with vapour of the smouldering flame."

"In happy hour," pleased Euryclea cries,
"Tutor'd by early woes, grow early wise !
Inspect with sharpen'd sight, and frugal care, 25
Your patrimonial wealth, a prudent heir.
But who the lighted taper will provide
(The female train retired) your toils to guide ?"

"Without infringing hospitable right,
This guest," he cried, "shall bear the guiding light :
I cheer no lazy vagrants with repast ; 31
They share the meal that earn it ere they taste."

He said ; from female ken she straight secures
The purposed deed, and guards the bolted doors :
Auxiliar to his son, Ulysses bears 35
The plummy-crested helms and pointed spears,
With shields indented deep in glorious wars.
Minerva viewless on her charge attends,
And with her golden lamp his toil befriends.
Not such the sickly beams, which insincere 40
Gild the gross vapour of this nether sphere !
A present deity the prince confess'd,
And rapt with ecstasy the sire address'd :

"What miracle thus dazzles with surprise !
Distinct in rows the radiant columns rise : 45
The walls, where'er my wondering sight I turn,
And roofs, amid a blaze of glory burn !
Some visitant of pure ethereal race
With his bright presence deigns the dome to grace."

"Be calm," replies the sire ; "to none impart, 50
But oft revolve the vision in thy heart :
Celestials, mantled in excess of light,
Can visit unapproach'd by mortal sight.
Seek thou repose ; while here I sole remain,
To explore the conduct of the female train : 55
The pensive queen, perchance, desires to know
The series of my toils, to sooth her wo."

With tapers flaming day his train attends,
His bright alcove the obsequious youth ascends :
Soft slumbering shades his drooping eyelids close,
Till on her eastern throne Aurora glows. 61

While, forming plans of death, Ulysses staid,
In council secret with the martial maid ;
Attendant nymphs in beauteous order wait
The queen, descending from her bower of state. 65
Her cheeks the warmer blush of Venus wear,
Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air.
An ivory seat with silver ringlets graced,
By famed Icmalius wrought, the menials placed :
With ivory silver'd thick the footstool shone, 70
O'er which the panther's various hide was thrown.
The sovereign seat with graceful air she press'd ;
To different tasks the toil their nymphs address'd :
The golden goblets some, and some restored
From stains of luxury the polish'd board : 75
These to remove the expiring embers came,
While those with unctuous fir foment the flame.

'Twas then Melantho with imperious mien
Renew'd the attack, incontinent of spleen :
"Avaunt," she cried, "offensive to my sight ! 80
Deem not in ambush here to lurk by night,
Into the woman state asquint to pry ;
A day devourer, and an evening spy !
Vagrant, begone ! before this blazing brand
Shall urge ;" and wav'd it hissing in her hand. 85

The insulted hero rolls his wrathful eyes,
And, "Why so turbulent of soul ?" he cries ;
"Can these lean shrivell'd limbs unnerved with age,
These poor but honest rags, enkindle rage ?
In crowds, we wear the badge of hungry fate ; 90
And beg, degraded from superior state !
Constrain'd a rent-charge on the rich I live ;
Reduced to crave the good I once could give :
A palace, wealth, and slaves, I late possess'd,
And all that makes the great be call'd the bless'd : 95

My gate, an emblem of my open soul,
 Embraced the poor, and dealt a bounteous dole.
 Scorn not the sad reverse, injurious maid !
 'Tis Jove's high will, and be his will obey'd '
 Nor think thyself exempt : that rosy prime 100
 Must share the general doom of withering time :
 To some new channel soon the changeful tide
 Of royal grace the offended queen may guide ;
 And her loved lord unplume thy towering pride.
 Or were he dead, 'tis wisdom to beware : 105
 Sweet blooms the prince beneath Apollo's care ;
 Your deeds with quick impartial eye surveys,
 Potent to punish what he cannot praise."

Her keen reproach had reach'd the sovereign's
 ear ;

" Loquacious insolent !" she cries, " forbear : 110
 To thee the purpose of my soul I told ;
 Venial discourse, unblamed, with him to hold ;
 The storied labours of my wandering lord,
 To sooth my grief he haply may record :
 Yet him, my guest, thy venom'd rage hath stung :
 Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue ! 116
 But thou on whom my palace cares depend,
 Eurynome, regard the stranger friend :
 A seat soft spread with furry spoils, prepare ;
 Due distant for us both to speak, and hear." 120

The menial fair obeys with duteous haste :
 A seat adorn'd with furry spoils she placed :
 Due distant for discourse the hero sat ;
 When thus the sovereign from her chair of state :
 " Reveal, obsequious to my first demand, 125
 Thy name, thy lineage, and thy natal land."

He thus : " Oh queen ! whose far-resounding
 fame
 Is bounded only by the starry frame,
 Consummate pattern of imperial sway,
 Whose pious rule a warlike race obey ! 130
 In wavy gold thy summer vales are dress'd ;
 Thy autumns bend with copious fruit oppress'd ;

With flocks and herds each grassy plain is stored;
And fish of every fin thy seas afford:
Their affluent joys the grateful realms confess, 135
And bless the Power that still delights to bless.
Gracious permit this prayer, imperial dame!
Forbear to know my lineage, or my name:
Urge not this breast to heave, these eyes to weep;
In sweet oblivion let my sorrows sleep! 140
My woes awaked will violate your ear;
And to this gay censorious train appear
A winy vapour melting in a tear."

"Their gifts the gods resumed," the queen rejoin'd,
"Exterior grace, and energy of mind; 145
When the dear partner of my nuptial joy,
Auxiliar troops combined to conquer 'Troy.
My lord's protecting hand alone would raise
My drooping verdure, and extend my praise!
Peers from the distant Samian shore resort; 150
Here with Dulichians join'd, besiege the court:
Zacynthus, green with ever-shady groves,
And Ithaca, presumptuous boast their loves:
Obtruding on my choice a second lord,
They press the Hymenean rite abhorr'd. 155
Misrule thus mingling with domestic cares,
I live regardless of my state affairs;
Receive no stranger guest, no poor relieve;
But ever for my lord in secret grieve!
This art, instinct by some celestial power, 160
I tried, elusive of the bridal hour:
'Ye peers,' I cry, 'who press to gain a heart,
Where dead Ulysses claims no future part;
Rebate your loves, each rival suit suspend,
Till this funereal web my labours end: 165
Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
A pall of state, the ornament of death.
For when to fate he bows, each Grecian dame
With just reproach were licensed to defame;
Should he, long honour'd in supreme command, 170
Want the last duties of a daughter's hand.'

The fiction pleased ; their loves I long elude ;
 The night still ravell'd what the day renew'd :
 Three years successful in my art conceal'd,
 My ineffectual fraud the fourth reveal'd : 175
 Befriended by my own domestic spies,
 The woof unwrought the suitor train surprise.
 From nuptial rites they now no more recede,
 And fear forbids to falsify the brede.

My anxious parents urge a speedy choice, 180
 And to their suffrage gain the filial voice.
 For rule mature, Telemachus deplores
 His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores.
 But, stranger ! as thy days seem full of fate,
 Divide discourse, in turn thy birth relate : 185
 Thy port asserts thee of distinguish'd race ;
 No poor unfather'd product of disgrace."

" Princess !" he cries, " renew'd by your command,
 The dear remembrance of my native land,
 Of secret grief unseals the fruitful source ; 190
 And tears repeat their long-forgotten course !
 So pays the wretch, whom fame constrains to roam,
 The dues of nature to his natal home !
 But inward on my soul let sorrow prey,
 Your sovereign will my duty bids obey. 195

" Crete awes the circling waves, a fruitful soil !
 And ninety cities crown the seaborn isle :
 Mix'd with her genuine sons, adopted names
 In various tongues avow their various claims :
 Cydonians, dreadful with the bended yew, 200
 And bold Pelasgi boast a native's due :
 The Dorians, plumed amid the files of war,
 Her foodful glebe with fierce Achaians share ;
 Cnossus, her capital of high command ;
 Where sceptred Minos with impartial hand 205
 Divided right ; each ninth revolving year
 By Jove received in council to confer.
 His son Deucalian bore successive sway ;
 His son, who gave me first to view the day !

The royal bed an elder issue bless'd, 210
Idomeneus, whom Ilion's fields attest
Of matchless deeds : untrain'd to martial toil
I lived inglorious in my native isle,
Studious of peace, and Æthon is my name.
'Twas then to Crete the great Ulysses came ; 215
For elemental war, and wintry Jove,
From Malea's gusty cape his navy drove
To bright Lucina's fane ; the shelfy coast
Where loud Amnisus in the deep is lost.
His vessels moor'd, (an incommodious port !) 220
The hero speeded to the Cnossian court ;
Ardent the partner of his arms to find,
In leagues of long-commutual friendship join'd.
Vain hope ! ten suns had warm'd the western strand
Since my brave brother with his Cretan band 225
Had sail'd for Troy : but to the genial feast
My honour'd roof received the royal guest :
Beeves for his train the Cnossian peers assign,
A public treat, with jars of generous wine.
Twelve days while Boreas vex'd the aerial space,
My hospitable dome he deign'd to grace : 231
And when the north had ceased the stormy roar,
He wing'd his voyage to the Phrygian shore."
Thus the famed hero, perfected in wiles,
With fair similitude of truth beguiles 235
The queen's attentive ear ; dissolved in wo,
From her bright eyes the tears unbounded flow,
As snows collected on the mountain freeze ;
When milder regions breathe a vernal breeze,
The fleecy pile obeys the whispering gales, 240
Ends in a stream, and murmurs through the vales :
So, melted with the pleasing tale he told,
Down her fair cheek the copious torrent roll'd ;
She to her present lord laments him lost,
And views that object which she wants the most !
Withering at heart to see the weeping fair, 246
His eyes look stern, and cast a gloomy stare ;

Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear,
Or globes of iron fix'd in either sphere ;
Firm wisdom interdicts the softening tear. 250
A speechless interval of grief ensues,
'Till thus the queen the tender theme renews :

“ Stranger ! that e'er thy hospitable roof
Ulysses graced, confirm by faithful proof ;
Delineate to my view my warlike lord, 255
His form, his habit, and his train record.”

“ 'Tis hard,” he cries, “ to bring to sudden sight
Ideas that have wing'd their distant flight ;
Rare on the mind those images are traced,
Whose footsteps twenty winters have defaced : 260
But what I can, receive : In ample mode,
A robe of military purple flow'd

O'er all his frame : illustrious on his breast,
The double-clasping gold the king confess'd.
In the rich woof a hound, mosaic drawn, 265
Bore on full stretch, and seized a dappled fawn :
Deep in the neck his fangs indent their hold ;
They pant and struggle in the moving gold.

Fine as a filmy web beneath it shone
A vest, that dazzled like a cloudless sun : 270
The female train who round him throng'd to gaze,
In silent wonder sigh'd unwilling praise.

A sabre, when the warrior press'd to part,
I gave, enamell'd with Vulcanian art :
A mantle purple-tinged, and radiant vest, 275
Dimension'd equal to his size, express'd
Affection grateful to my honour'd guest.

A favourite herald in his train I knew,
His visage solemn sad, of sable hue ;
Short woolly curls o'erfleece'd his bending head, 280
O'er which a promontory shoulder spread ;
Eurybates ! in whose large soul alone
Ulysses view'd an image of his own.”

His speech the tempest of her grief restored ;
In all he told she recognised her lord : 285

But when the storm was spent in plenteous showers,
 A pause inspiriting her languish'd powers,
 "Oh thou," she cried, "whom first inclement fate
 Made welcome to my hospitable gate;
 With all thy wants the name of poor shalt end: 290
 Henceforth live honour'd, my domestic friend!
 The vest much envied on your native coast,
 And regal robe with figured gold emboss'd,
 In happier hours my artful hand employ'd,
 When my loved lord this blissful bower enjoy'd: 295
 The fall of Troy erroneous and forlorn
 Doom'd to survive, and never to return!"

Then he, with pity touch'd: "Oh royal dame!
 Your ever-anxious mind, and beauteous frame,
 From the devouring rage of grief reclaim. 300
 I not the fondness of your soul reprove
 For such a lord! who crown'd your virgin love
 With the dear blessing of a fair increase;
 Himself adorn'd with more than mortal grace:
 Yet while I speak, the mighty wo suspend; 305
 Truth forms my tale; to pleasing truth attend.
 The royal object of your dearest care
 Breathes in no distant clime the vital air:
 In rich Thesprotia, and the nearer bound
 Of Thessaly, his name I heard renown'd: 310
 Without retinue, to that friendly shore
 Welcomed with gifts of price, a sumless store!
 His sacrilegious train, who dared to prey
 On herds devoted to the god of day,
 Were doom'd by Jove and Phœbus' just decree, 315
 To perish in the rough Tinnacrian sea.
 To better fate the blameless chief ordain'd,
 A floating fragment of the wreck regain'd,
 And rode the storm: till, by the billows toss'd,
 He landed on the fair Phæacian coast. 320
 That race who emulate the life of gods,
 Receive him joyous to their bless'd abodes:
 Large gifts confer, a ready sail command,
 To speed his voyage to the Grecian strand.

But your wise lord (in whose capacious soul 325
 High schemes of power in just succession roll)
 His Ithaca refused from favouring fate,
 Till copious wealth might guard his regal state.
 Phedon the fact affirm'd, whose sovereign sway
 Thesprotian tribes, a duteous race, obey : 330
 And bade the gods this added truth attest,
 (While pure libations crown'd the genial feast,)
 That anchor'd in his port the vessels stand,
 To waft the hero to his natal land.
 I for Dulichium urge the watery way, 335
 But first the Ulyssean wealth survey :
 So rich the value of a store so vast
 Demands the pomp of centuries to waste !
 The darling object of your royal love
 Was journey'd thence to Dodonean Jove ; 340
 By the sure precept of the sylvan shrine,
 To form the conduct of his great design :
 Irresolute of soul, his state to shroud
 In dark disguise, or come, a king avow'd ?
 Thus lives your lord ; nor longer doom'd to roam :
 Soon will he grace this dear paternal dome. 346
 By Jove, the source of good, supreme in power !
 By the bless'd genius of this friendly bower !
 I ratify my speech, before the sun
 His annual longitude of heaven shall run ; 350
 When the pale empress of yon starry train
 In the next month renews her faded wane,
 Ulysses will assert his rightful reign."

"What thanks ! what boon !" replied the queen,
 "are due, 354

When time shall prove the storied blessing true ?
 My lord's return should fate no more retard,
 Envy shall sicken at thy vast reward.
 But my prophetic fears, alas ! presage
 The wounds of Destiny's relentless rage.
 I long must weep, nor will Ulysses come, 360
 With royal gifts to send you honour'd home !

Your other task, ye menial train, forbear :
Now wash the stranger, and the bed prepare :
With splendid palls the downy fleece adorn .
Uprising early with the purple morn, 365
His sinews shrunk with age, and stiff with toil,
In the warm bath foment with fragrant oil.
Then with Telemachus the social feast
Partaking free, my sole invited guest ;
Whoe'er neglects to pay distinction due, 370
The breach of hospitable right may rue.
The vulgar of my sex I most exceed
In real fame, when most humane my deed ;
And vainly to the praise of queen aspire,
If, stranger ! I permit that mean attire 375
Beneath the feastful bower. A narrow space
Confines the circle of our destined race ;
'Tis ours with good the scanty round to grace.
Those who to cruel wrong their state abuse,
Dreaded in life, the mutter'd curse pursues ; 380
By death disrobed of all their savage powers,
Then, licensed Rage her hateful prey devours.
But he whose inborn worth his acts commend,
Of gentle soul, to human race a friend ;
The wretched he relieves diffuse his fame, 385
And distant tongues extol the patron name.”
“ Princess,” he cried, “ in vain your bounties flow
On me, confirm'd and obstinate in wo.
When my loved Crete received my final view,
And from my weeping eyes her cliffs withdrew, 390
These tatter'd weeds (my decent robe resign'd)
I chose, the livery of a woful mind !
Nor will my heart-corroding cares abate
With splendid palls, and canopies of state :
Low-couch'd on earth, the gift of sleep I scorn, 395
And catch the glances of the waking morn.
The delicacy of your courtly train
To wash a wretched wanderer would disdain ;
But if, in tract of long experience tried,
And sad similitude of woes allied, 400

Some wretch reluctant views aerial light,
To her mean hand assign the friendly rite."

Pleased with his wise reply, the queen rejoin'd :
" Such gentle manners, and so sage a mind,
In all who graced this hospitable bower 405
I ne'er discern'd, before this social hour.

" Such servant as your humble choice requires,
To light received the lord of my desires,
New from the birth ; and with a mother's hand
His tender bloom to manly growth sustain'd : 410
Of matchless prudence, and a duteous mind :
' Though now to life's extremest verge declined,
Of strength superior to the toil assign'd.

Rise, Euryclea ! with officious care
For the poor friend the cleansing bath prepare : 415
This debt his correspondent fortunes claim,
Too like Ulysses, and perhaps the same !
' Thus old with woes my fancy paints him now :
For age untimely marks the careful brow."

Instant, obsequious to the mild command, 420
Sad Euryclea rose : with trembling hand
She veils the torrent of her tearful eyes ;
And thus impassion'd to herself replies :

" Son of my love, and monarch of my cares !
What pangs for thee this wretched bosom bears !
Are thus by Jove who constant beg his aid 426
With pious deed, and pure devotion, paid ?

He never dared defraud the sacred fane,
Of perfect hecatombs in order slain :

There oft implored his tutelary power, 430
Long to protract the sad sepulchral hour ;

That, form'd for empire with paternal care,
His realm might recognise an equal heir.

Oh destined head ! The pious vows are lost ;
His god forgets him on a foreign coast ! 435

Perhaps, like thee, poor guest ! in wanton pride
' The rich insult him, and the young deride !

Conscious of worth reviled, thy generous mind
The friendly rite of purity declined ;

My will concurring with my queen's command, 440
Accept the bath from this obsequious hand.
A strong emotion shakes my anguish'd breast :
In thy whole form Ulysses seems express'd :
Of all the wretched harbour'd on our coast,
None imaged e'er like thee my master lost." 445

Thus half discover'd through the dark disguise,
With cool composure feign'd, the chief replies :
" You join your suffrage to the public vote ;
The same you think have all beholders thought."

He said : replenish'd from the purest springs, 450
The laver straight with busy care she brings :
In the deep vase, that shone like burnish'd gold,
The boiling fluid temperates the cold.
Meantime revolving in his thoughtful mind
The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd ;
His face averting from the crackling blaze, 456
His shoulders intercept the unfriendly rays :
Thus cautious in the obscure he hoped to fly
The curious search of Euryclea's eye.

Cautious in vain ! nor ceased the dame to find 460
The scar with which his manly knee was sign'd.

This on Parnassus (combating the boar)
With glancing rage the tusky savage tore.
Attended by his brave maternal race,
His grandsire sent him to the sylvan chase, 465
Autolycus the bold : (a mighty name
For spotless faith and deeds of martial fame :
Hermes, his patron god, those gifts bestow'd,
Whose shrine with weanling lambs he wont to load.)
His course to Ithaca this hero sped, 470
When the first product of Laertes' bed
Was new disclosed to birth ; the banquet ends,
When Euryclea from the queen descends,
And to his fond embrace the babe commends : 474
" Receive," she cries, " your royal daughter's son ;
And name the blessing that your prayers have won."
Then thus the hoary chief : " My victor arms
Have awed the realms around with dire alarms :

A sure memorial of my dreaded fame
 The boy shall bear ; Ulysses be his name ! 480
 And when with filial love the youth shall come
 To view his mother's soil, my Delphic dome
 With gifts of price shall send him joyous home."
 Lured with the promised boon, when youthful prime
 Ended in man, his mother's natal clime 485
 Ulysses sought ; with fond affection dear
 Amphythea's arms received the royal heir :
 Her ancient lord an equal joy possess'd ;
 Instant he bade prepare the genial feast :
 A steer to form the sumptuous banquet bled, 490
 Whose stately growth five flowery summers fed :
 His sons divide, and roast with artful care
 'The limbs ; then all the tasteful viands share.
 Nor ceased discourse, (the banquet of the soul,)
 'Till Phœbus wheeling to the western goal 495
 Resign'd the skies, and night involved the pole.
 Their drooping eyes the slumberous shade oppress'd,
 Sated they rose, and all retired to rest.

Soon as the morn, new robed in purple light,
 Pierced with her golden shafts the rear of night, 500
 Ulysses, and his brave maternal race
 The young Antolyci, assay the chase.
 Parnassus, thick perplex'd with horrid shades,
 With deep-mouth'd hounds the hunter troop invades,
 What time the sun, from ocean's peaceful stream,
 Darts o'er the lawn his horizontal beam. 506
 The pack impatient snuff the tainted gale ;
 The thorny wilds the woodmen fierce assail ;
 And, foremost of the train, his cornel spear
 Ulysses waved, to rouse the savage war. 510
 Deep in the rough recesses of the wood,
 A lofty copse, the growth of ages, stood ;
 Nor winter's boreal blast, nor thunderous shower,
 Nor solar ray, could pierce the shady bower.
 With wither'd foliage strew'd a heapy store ! 515
 'The warm pavilion of a dreadful boar.

Roused by the hounds' and hunters' mingling cries,
The savage from his leafy shelter flies ;
With fiery glare his sanguine eyeballs shine,
And bristles high impale his horrid chine. 520
Young Ithacus advanced, defies the foe,
Poising his lifted lance in act to throw ;
The savage renders vain the wound decreed,
And springs impetuous with opponent speed.
His tusks oblique he aim'd; the knee to gore ; 525
Aslope they glanced, the sinewy fibres tore,
And bared the bone ; Ulysses undismay'd,
Soon with redoubled force the wound repaid ;
To the right shoulder-joint the spear applied ;
His farther flank with streaming purple died ; 530
On earth he rush'd with agonizing pain ;
With joy and vast surprise, the applauding train
View'd his enormous bulk extended on the plain.
With bandage firm Ulysses' knee they bound ;
Then, chanting mystic lays, the closing wound 535
Of sacred melody confess'd the force ;
The tides of life regain'd their azure course.
Then back they led the youth with loud acclaim :
Autolycus, enamour'd with his fame,
Confirm'd the cure ; and from the Delphic dome 540
With added gifts return'd him glorious home.
He safe at Ithaca with joy received,
Relates the chase, and early praise achieved.
Deep o'er his knee in seam'd remain'd the scar :
Which noted token of the woodland war 545
When Euryclea found, the ablution ceased :
Down dropp'd the leg, from her slack hand released ;
The mingled fluids from the vase redound ;
The vase reclining floats the floor around !
Smiles dew'd with tears the pleasing strife express'd
Of grief and joy, alternate in her breast. 551
Her fluttering words, in melting murmurs died ;
At length abrupt, " My son !—my king !" she cried.
His neck with fond embrace infolding fast,
Full on the queen her raptur'd eye she cast. 555

Ardent to speak the monarch safe restored :
 But studious to conceal her royal lord,
 Minerva fix'd her mind on views remote,
 And from the present bliss abstracts her thought.
 His hand to Euryclea's mouth applied, 560
 " Art thou foredoom'd my pest !" the hero cried ;
 " Thy milky founts my infant lips have drain'd ;
 And have the fates thy babbling age ordain'd
 'To violate the life thy youth sustain'd ?
 An exile have I told, with weeping eyes, 565
 Full twenty annual suns in distant skies ;
 At length return'd, some god inspires thy breast
 To know thy king, and here I stand confess'd.
 This Heaven-discover'd truth to thee consign'd,
 Reserve the treasure of thy inmost mind : 570
 Else, if the gods my vengeful arm sustain,
 And prostrate to my sword the suitor train ;
 With their lewd mates, thy undistinguish'd age
 Shall bleed a victim to vindictive rage."

Then thus rejoin'd the dame, devoid of fear : 575
 " What words, my son, have pass'd thy lips severe ?
 Deep in my soul the trust shall lodge secured ;
 With ribs of steel, and marble heart, immured.
 When Heaven, auspicious to thy right avow'd,
 Shall prostrate to thy sword the suitor crowd ; 580
 The deeds I'll blazon of the menial fair ;
 The lewd to death devote, the virtuous spare."

" Thy aid avails me not," the chief replied ;
 " My own experience shall their doom decide ;
 A witness-judge precludes a long appeal : 585
 Suffice it then thy monarch to conceal."

He said : obsequious with redoubled pace,
 She to the fount conveys the exhausted vase :
 The bath renew'd, she ends the pleasing toil
 With plenteous unction of ambrosial oil. 590
 Adjusting to his limbs the tatter'd vest,
 His former seat received the stranger guest ;
 Whom thus with pensive air the queen address'd :

“Though night, dissolving grief in grateful ease,
Your drooping eyes with soft oppression seize, 595
A while, reluctant to her pleasing force,
Suspend the restful hour with sweet discourse.
The day ne’er brighten’d with a beam of joy!
My menials, and domestic cares employ :
And unattended by sincere repose, 600
The night assists my ever-wakeful woes :
When nature’s hush’d beneath her brooding shade,
My echoing griefs the starry vault invade.
As when the months are clad in flowery green,
Sad Philomel, in bowery shades unseen, 605
To vernal airs attunes her varied strains ;
And Itylus sounds warbling o’er the plains :
Young Itylus, his parent’s darling joy !
Whom chance misled the mother to destroy ;
Now doom’d a wakeful bird to wail the beauteous
boy. 610
So in nocturnal solitude forlorn,
A sad variety of woes I mourn !
My mind, reflective, in a thorny maze
Devious from care to care incessant strays.
Now, wavering doubt succeeds to long despair ; 615
Shall I my virgin nuptial vow revere ;
And joining to my son’s my menial train,
Partake his councils and assist his reign ?
Or, since, mature in manhood, he deplores
His dome dishonour’d, and exhausted stores ; 620
Shall I, reluctant ! to his will accord,
And from the peers select the noblest lord ;
So by my choice avow’d, at length decide
These wasteful love debates, a mourning bride ?
A visionary thought I’ll now relate ; 625
Illustrate, if you know, the shadow’d fate.
“ A team of twenty geese, a snow-white train !
Fed near the limpid lake with golden grain,
Amuse my pensive hours. The bird of Jove 629
Fierce from his mountain eyry downward drove :

Each favourite fowl he pounced with deathful sway,
 And back triumphant wing'd his airy way.
 My pitying eyes effused a plenteous stream,
 To view their death thus imaged in a dream ;
 With tender sympathy to sooth my soul, 635
 A troop of matrons, fancy-form'd, condole.
 But while with grief and rage my bosom burn'd,
 Sudden the tyrant of the skies return'd :
 Perch'd on the battlements he thus began :
 (In form an eagle, but in voice a man :) 640
 'Oh queen ! no vulgar vision of the sky
 I come, prophetic of approaching joy :
 View in this plummy form thy victor lord ;
 The geese, a glutton race, by thee deplored,
 Portend the suitors fated to my sword.' 645
 This said, the pleasing feathered omen ceased.
 When from the downy bands of sleep released,
 Fast by the limpid lake my swanlike train
 I found, insatiate of the golden grain."

"The vision self-explain'd," the chief replies, 650
 "Sincere reveals the sanction of the skies :
 Ulysses speaks his own return decreed ;
 And by his sword the suitors sure to bleed."

"Hard is the task, and rare," the queen rejoin'd,
 "Impending destinies in dreams to find : 655
 Immured within the silent bower of sleep,
 To portals firm the various phantoms keep :
 Of ivory one ; whence flit, to mock the brain,
 Of winged lies a light fantastic train :
 The gate opposed pellucid valves adorn, 660
 And columns fair incased with polish'd horn :
 Where images of truth for passage wait,
 With visions manifest of future fate.
 Not to this troop, I fear, that phantom soar'd,
 Which spoke Ulysses to this realm restored : 665
 Delusive semblance ! but my remnant life
 Heaven shall determine in a gameful strife :
 With that famed bow Ulysses taught to bend,
 For me the rival archers shall contend.

As on the listed field he used to place 670
Six beams, opposed to six in equal space :
Elanced afar by his unerring art,
Sure through six circlets flew the whizzing dart.
So, when the sun restores the purple day,
Their strength and skill the suitors shall assay : 675
To him the spousal honour is decreed,
Who through the rings directs the feather'd reed.
Torn from these walls, (where long the kinder
powers
With joy and pomp have wing'd my youthful hours !)
On this poor breast no dawn of bliss shall beam ;
The pleasure past supplies a copious theme 680
For many a dreary thought, and many a doleful
dream !”

“ Propose the sportive lot,” the chief replies,
“ Nor dread to name yourself the bowyer's prize :
Ulysses will surprise the unfinish'd game 685
Avow'd, and falsify the suitors' claim.”
To whom with grace serene the queen rejoin'd :
“ In all thy speech what pleasing force I find !
O'er my suspended wo thy words prevail ;
I part reluctant from the pleasing tale. 690
But Heaven, that knows what all terrestrials need,
Repose to night, and toil to day decreed ;
Grateful vicissitude ! yet me withdrawn,
Wakeful to weep and watch the tardy dawn
Establish'd use enjoins ; to rest and joy 695
Estranged, since dear Ulysses sail'd to Troy !
Meantime instructed is the menial tribe
Your couch to fashion as yourself prescribe.”

Thus affable, her bower the queen ascends ;
The sovereign step a beauteous train attends : 700
There imaged to her soul Ulysses rose ;
Down her pale cheek new streaming sorrow flows :
Till soft oblivious shade Minerva spread,
And o'er her eyes ambrosial slumber shed.

BOOK XX.

ARGUMENT.

WHILE Ulysses lies in the vestibule of the palace he is witness to the disorders of the women—Minerva comforts him, and casts him asleep—At his waking he desires a favourable sign from Jupiter, which is granted—The feast of Apollo is celebrated by the people, and the suitors banquet in the palace—Telemachus exerts his authority among them; notwithstanding which, Ulysses is insulted by Ctesippus, and the rest continue in their excesses—Strange prodigies are seen by Theoclymenus the augur, who explains them to the destruction of the wooers.

AN ample hide divine Ulysses spread,
And form'd of fleecy skins his humble bed :
(The remnants of the spoil the suitor crowd
In festival devour'd, and victims vow'd.)
Then o'er the chief, Eurynome the chaste 5
With duteous care a downy carpet cast :
With dire revenge his thoughtful bosom glows,
And, ruminating wrath, he scorns repose.
As thus pavilion'd in the porch he lay,
Scenes of lewd loves his wakeful eyes survey, 10
While to nocturnal joys impure repair,
With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.
His heart with rage this new dishonour stung,
Wavering his thoughts in dubious balance hung :
Or instant should he quench the guilty flame 15
With their own blood, and intercept the shame ;
Or to their lust indulge a last embrace,
And let the peers consummate the disgrace.
Round his swoln heart the murmurous fury rolls ;
As o'er her young the mother mastiff growls, 20

And bays the stranger groom : so wrath compress'd
Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breast.

"Poor suffering heart !" he cried, "support the pain
Of wounded honour, and thy rage restrain.

Not fiercer woes thy fortitude could foil, 25

When the brave partners of thy ten years' toil

Dire Polypheme devour'd ; I then was freed

By patient prudence from the death decreed."

Thus anchored safe on reason's peaceful coast,
Tempests of wrath his soul no longer toss'd ; 30

Restless his body rolls, to rage resign'd :

As one who long with pale-eyed famine pined,

The savoury cates on glowing embers cast

Incessant turns, impatient for repast :

Ulysses so, from side to side devolved, 35

In self-debate the suitors' doom resolved.

When, in the form of mortal nymph array'd,

From heaven descends the Jove-born martial maid ;

And hovering o'er his head in view confess'd,

The goddess thus her favourite care address'd : 40

"Oh thou, of mortals most inured to woes !

Why roll those eyes unfriended of repose ?

Beneath thy palace roof forget thy care ;

Bless'd in thy queen ! bless'd in thy blooming heir !

Whom, to the gods when suppliant fathers bow, 45

They name the standard of their dearest vow."

"Just is thy kind reproach," the chief rejoin'd,

"Deeds full of fate distract my various mind,

In contemplation wrapp'd. This hostile crew

What single arm hath prowess to subdue ? 50

Or if, by Jove's and thy auxiliar aid,

They're doom'd to bleed ; oh say, celestial maid !

Where shall Ulysses shun, or how sustain

Nations embattled to revenge the slain ?"

"Oh impotence of faith !" Minerva cries, 55

"If man on frail unknowing man relies,

Doubt you the gods ? Lo, Pallas' self descends,

Inspires thy counsels, and thy toils attends.

In me affianced, fortify thy breast,
 Though myriads leagued thy rightful claim contest:
 My sure divinity shall bear the shield, 61
 And edge thy sword to reap the glorious field.
 Now, pay the debt to craving nature due,
 Her faded powers with balmy rest renew."
 She ceased, ambrosial slumbers seal his eyes; 65
 His care dissolves in visionary joys;
 The goddess, pleased, regains her natal skies.
 Not so the queen: the downy bands of sleep
 By grief relax'd, she waked again to weep:
 A gloomy pause ensued of dumb despair; 70
 Then thus her fate invoked with fervent prayer:
 "Diana! speed thy deathful ebon dart,
 And cure the pangs of this convulsive heart.
 Snatch me, ye whirlwinds! far from human race,
 Toss'd through the void illimitable space: 75
 Or if dismounted from the rapid cloud,
 Me with his whelming wave let ocean shroud!
 So, Pandarus, thy hopes, three orphan fair,
 Were doom'd to wander through the devious air;
 Thyself untimely, and thy consort died, 80
 But four celestials both your cares supplied.
 Venus in tender delicacy rears
 With honey, milk, and wine, their infant years:
 Imperial Juno to their youth assign'd
 A form majestic and sagacious mind: 85
 With shapely growth Diana graced their bloom;
 And Pallas taught the texture of the loom.
 But while, to learn their lots in nuptial love,
 Bright Cytherea sought the bower of Jove,
 (The god supreme, to whose eternal eye 90
 The registers of fate expanded lie,)
 Wing'd harpies snatch the unguarded charge away,
 And to the furies bore a grateful prey.
 Be such my lot! Or thou, Diana, speed
 Thy shaft, and send me joyful to the dead: 95
 To seek my lord among the warrior train,
 Ere second vows my bridal faith profane

When woes the waking sense alone assail,
 While Night extends her soft oblivious veil,
 Of other wretches' care the torture ends : 100
 No truce the warfare of my heart suspends !
 The night renews the day-distracting theme
 And airy terrors sable every dream.
 The last alone a kind illusion wrought,
 And to my bed my loved Ulysses brought, 105
 A manly bloom, and each majestic grace,
 As when for Troy he left my fond embrace ;
 Such raptures in my beating bosom rise,
 I deem it sure a vision of the skies."
 Thus, while Aurora mounts her purple throne, 110
 In audible laments she breathes her moan ;
 The sounds assault Ulysses' wakeful ear :
 Misjudging of the cause, a sudden fear
 Of his arrival known, the chief alarms ;
 He thinks the queen is rushing to his arms. 115
 Springing from his couch, with active haste
 He fleeces and carpet in the dome he placed ;
 (He hides, without, imbibed the morning air ;)
 And thus the gods invoked with ardent prayer :
 "Jove, and ethereal thrones ! with Heaven to friend
 The long series of my woes shall end ; 121
 Of human race now rising from repose,
 Let one a blissful omen here disclose ;
 And, to confirm my faith, propitious Jove !
 Touchsafe the sanction of a sign above." 125
 While lowly thus the chief adoring bows,
 The pitying god his guardian aid avows.
 Loud from a sapphire sky his thunder sounds :
 With springing hope the hero's heart rebounds.
 Soon, with consummate joy to crown his prayer, 130
 An omen'd voice invades his ravish'd ear.
 Beneath a pile that close the dome adjoin'd,
 Twelve female slaves the gift of Ceres grind ;
 Ask'd for the royal board to bolt the bran
 From the pure flour—(the growth and strength of
 man :) 135

Discharging to the day the labour due,
Now early to repose the rest withdrew;
One maid, unequal to the task assign'd,
Still turn'd the toilsome mill with anxious mind;
And thus in bitterness of soul divined: 140

“Father of gods and men, whose thunders roll
O'er the cerulean vault, and shake the pole:
Whoe'er from Heaven has gain'd his rare ostent
(Of granted vows a certain signal sent)
In this bless'd moment of accepted prayer, 145
Piteous, regard a wretch consumed with care!
Instant, oh Jove! confound the suitor train,
For whom o'ertoil'd I grind the golden grain:
Far from this dome the lewd devourers cast,
And be this festival decreed their last!” 150

Big with their doom denounced in earth and sky,
Ulysses' heart dilates with secret joy.
Meantime the menial train with unctuous wood
Heap'd high the genial hearth, Vulcanian food:
When, early dress'd, advanced the royal heir: 155
With manly grasp he waved a martial spear,
A radiant sabre graced his purple zone,
And on his foot the golden sandal shone.
His steps impetuous to the portal press'd:
And Euryclea thus he there address'd: 160

“Say thou, to whom my youth its nurture owes,
Was care for due refection and repose
Bestow'd the stranger guest? Or waits he grieved,
His age not honour'd, nor his wants relieved?
Promiscuous grace on all the queen confers: 165
(In woes bewilder'd, oft the wisest errs.)
The wordy vagrant to the dole aspires,
And modest worth with noble scorn retires.”

She thus: “Oh cease that ever-honour'd name
To blemish now: it ill deserves your blame. 170
A bowl of generous wine sufficed the guest;
In vain the queen the night refection press'd;
Nor would he court repose in downy state,
Unbless'd, abandon'd to the rage of fate!

A hide beneath the portico was spread, 175
 And fleecy skins composed an humble bed :
 A downy carpet cast with duteous care,
 Secured him from the keen nocturnal air."

His cornel javelin poised, with regal port,
 To the sage Greeks convened in Themis' court, 180
 Forth issuing from the dome the prince repair'd ;
 Two dogs of chase, a lion-hearted guard,
 Behind him sourly stalk'd. Without delay
 The dame divides the labour of the day ;
 'Thus urging to the toil the menial train : 185
 "What marks of luxury the marble stain !
 Its wonted lustre let the floor regain ;
 The seats with purple clothe in order due ;
 And let the abstersive sponge the board renew :
 Let some refresh the vase's sullied mold ; 190
 Some bid the goblets boast their native gold :
 Some to the spring, with each a jar, repair,
 And copious waters pure for bathing bear :
 Despatch ! for soon the suitors will assay
 'The lunar feast-rites to the god of day." 195

She said ; with duteous haste a bevy fair
 Of twenty virgins to the spring repair :
 With varied toils the rest adorn the dome.
 Magnificent, and blithe, the suitors come.
 Some wield the sounding axe ; the dodder'd oaks 200
 Divide, obedient to the forceful strokes.
 Soon from the fount, with each a brimming urn,
 (Eumæus in their train,) the maids return.
 Three porkers for the feast, all bràwny chined,
 He brought ; the choicest of the tusky kind : 205
 In lodgments first secure his care he view'd,
 Then to the king his friendly speech renew'd :
 "Now say sincere, my guest ! the suitor train
 Still treat they worth with lordly dull disdain :
 Or speaks their deed a bounteous mind humane ?"
 "Some pitying god," Ulysses sad replied, 211
 'With vollied vengeance blast their towering pride !

No conscious blush, no sense of right, restrains
The tides of lust that swell their boiling veins :
From vice to vice their appetites are toss'd, 215
All cheaply sated at another's cost !”

While thus the chief his woes indignant told,
Melanthius, master of the bearded fold,
The goodliest goats of all the royal herd
Spontaneous to the suitors' feast preferr'd : 220
Two grooms assistant bore the victims bound ;
With quavering cries the vaulted roofs resound :
And to the chief austere aloud began
The wretch unfriendly to the race of man :

“ Here, vagrant, still ? offensive to my lords ! 225
Blows have more energy than airy words :
These arguments I'll use : nor conscious shame,
Nor threats, thy bold intrusion will reclaim.
On this high feast the meanest vulgar boast
A plenteous board ! hence ! seek another host !” 230

Rejoinder to the churl the king disdain'd,
But shook his head, and rising wrath restrain'd.

From Cephalenia cross the surge main
Philæti^{us} late arrived, a faithful swain.
A steer ungrateful to the bull's embrace, 235
And goats he brought, the pride of all their race ;
Imported in a shallop not his own :
The dome re-echoed to their mingled moan.
Straight to the guardian of the bristly kind
He thus began, benevolent of mind : 240

“ What guest is he, of such majestic air ?
His lineage and paternal clime declare :
Dim through the eclipse of fate, the rays divine
Of sovereign state with faded splendour shine.
If monarchs by the gods are plunged in wo, 245
To what abyss are we foredoom'd to go !”
Then affable he thus the chief address'd,
While with pathetic warmth his hand he press'd :

“ Stranger, may fate a milder aspect show,
And spin thy future with a whiter clew ! 250

Oh Jove ! for ever deaf to human cries ;
 The tyrant, not the father of the skies !
 Unpiteous of the race thy will began !
 The fool of fate, thy manufacture, man,
 With penury, contempt, repulse, and care, 255
 The galling load of life is doom'd to bear.
 Ulysses from his state a wanderer still,
 Upbraids thy power, thy wisdom, or thy will !
 Oh monarch ever dear !—oh man of wo !—
 Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow ! 260
 Like thee, poor stranger guest, denied his home !
 Like thee, in rags obscene decreed to roam !
 Or, haply perish'd on some distant coast,
 In Stygian gloom he glides, a pensive ghost !
 Oh, grateful for the good his bounty gave, 265
 I'll grieve, till sorrow sink me to the grave !
 His kind protecting hand my youth preferr'd,
 The regent of his Cephallenian herd :
 With vast increase beneath my care it spreads :
 A stately breed ! and blackens far the meads. 270
 Constrain'd, the choicest beeves I thence import,
 To cram these cormorants that crowd his court .
 Who in partition seek his realm to share ;
 Nor human right nor wrath divine revere.
 Since here resolved oppressive these reside, 275
 Contending doubts my anxious heart divide :
 Now to some foreign clime inclined to fly,
 And with the royal herd protection buy :
 Then, happier thoughts return the nodding scale,
 Light mounts despair, alternate hopes prevail : 280
 In opening prospects of ideal joy,
 My king returns ; the proud usurpers die.”
 To whom the chief : “ In thy capacious mind
 Since daring zeal with cool debate is join'd,
 Attend a deed already ripe in fate : 285
 Attest, oh Jove ! the truth I now relate !
 This sacred truth attest, each genial power,
 Who bless the board, and guard this friendly bower !

Before thou quit the dome (nor long delay)
 Thy wish produced in act, with pleased survey, 290
 Thy wondering eyes shall view : his rightful reign
 By arms avow'd Ulysses shall regain,
 And to the shades devote the suitor train."

"Oh Jove supreme !" the raptured swain replies,
 "With deeds consummate soon the promised joys !
 These aged nerves, with newborn vigour strung,
 In that bless'd cause should emulate the young"—
 Assents Eumæus to the prayer address'd,
 And equal ardours fire his loyal breast.

Meantime the suitors urge the prince's fate, 300
 And deathful arts employ the dire debate :
 When in his airy tour, the bird of Jove
 Truss'd with his sinewy pounce a trembling dove ;
 Sinister to their hope ! This omen eyed
 Amphinomus, who thus presaging cried : 305

"The gods from force and fraud the prince defend !
 Oh peers ! the sanguinary scheme suspend :
 Your future thought let sable fate employ,
 And give the present hour to genial joy."

From council straight the assenting peerage ceased,
 And in the dome prepared the genial feast. 311

Disrobed, their vests apart in order lay,
 Then all with speed succinct the victims slay ;
 With sheep and shaggy goats the porkers bled,
 And the proud steer was on the marble spread. 315

With fire prepared, they deal the morsels round,
 Wine, rosy bright, the brimming goblets crown'd,
 By sage Eumæus born ; the purple tide
 Melanthius from an ample jar supplied :
 High canisters of bread Philæti^{us} placed ; 320
 And eager all devour the rich repast.

Disposed apart, Ulysses shares the treat ;
 A trivet table, and ignobler seat,
 The prince appoints ; but to his sire assigns
 The tasteful inwards and nectareous wines. 325

"Partake, my guest," he cried, "without control
 The social feast, and drain the cheering bowl :

Dread not the railer's laugh, nor ruffian's rage;
No vulgar roof protects thy honour'd age;
'This dome a refuge to thy wrongs shall be, 330
From my great sire too soon devolved to me!
Your violence and scorn, ye suitors, cease,
Lest arms avenge the violated peace."

Awed by the prince, so haughty, brave, and young,
Rage gnaw'd the lip, amazement chain'd the tongue.
"Be patient, peers!" at length Antinous cries; 336
"The threats of vain imperious youth despise:
Would Jove permit the meditated blow,
That stream of eloquence should cease to flow."

Without reply vouchsafed, Antinous ceased: 340
Meanwhile the pomp of festival increased:
By heralds rank'd, in marshall'd order move
The city tribes, to pleased Apollo's grove:
Beneath the verdure of which awful shade
The lunar hecatomb they grateful laid; 345
Partook the sacred feast, and ritual honours paid.
But the rich banquet in the dome prepared,
(A humble sideboard set,) Ulysses shared.
Observant of the prince's high behest,
His menial train attend the stranger guest: 350
Whom Pallas with unpardoning fury fired,
By lordly pride and keen reproach inspired.
A Samian peer, more studious than the rest
Of vice, who teem'd with many a deadborn jest;
And urged, for title to a consort queen, 355
Unnumber'd acres arable and green;
(Ctesippus named;) this lord Ulysses eyed,
And thus burst out the imposthumate with pride:
"The sentence I propose, ye peers, attend:
Since due regard must wait the prince's friend, 360
Let each a token of esteem bestow:
This gift acquits the dear respect I owe;
With which he nobly may discharge his seat,
And pay the menials for the master's treat."

He said; and of the steer before him placed, 365
That sinewy fragment at Ulysses cast,

Where to the pastern bone, by nerves combined,
The well-horn'd foot indissolubly join'd ;
Which whizzing high, the wall unseemly sign'd.
The chief indignant grins a ghastly smile ; 370
Revenge and scorn within his bosom boil :
When thus the prince with pious rage inflamed :

“ Had not the inglorious wound thy malice aim'd
Fall'n guiltless of the mark, my certain spear
Had made thee buy the brutal triumph dear : 375
Nor should thy sire a queen his daughter boast ;
The suitor, now, had vanish'd in a ghost :
No more, ye lewd compeers, with lawless power
Invade my dome, my herds and flocks devour :
For genuine worth, of age mature to know, 380
My grape shall redden, and my harvest grow.
Or, if each other's wrongs ye still support,
With rapes and riots to profane my court ;
What single arm with numbers can contend ?
On me let all your lifted swords descend, 385
And with my life such vile dishonours end.”

A long cessation of discourse ensued,
By gentler Agelaus thus renew'd :

“ A just reproof, ye peers ! your rage restrain
From the protected guest, and menial train : 390
And, prince ! to stop the source of future ill,
Assent yourself, and gain the royal will.
While hope prevail'd to see your sire restored,
Of right the queen refused a second lord :
But who so vain of faith, so blind to fate, 395
To think he still survives to claim the state ?
Now press the sovereign dame with warm desire
To wed, as wealth or worth her choice inspire :
The lord selected to the nuptial joys
Far hence will lead the long-contested prize : 400
While in paternal pomp with plenty bless'd,
You reign, of this imperial dome possess'd.”

Sage and serene Telemachus replies :
“ By him at whose behest the thunder flies,

And by the name on earth I most revere, 405
 By great Ulysses and his woes I swear!
 (Who never must review his dear domain;
 Enroll'd, perhaps, in Pluto's dreary train,
 Whene'er her choice the royal dame avows,
 My bridal gifts shall load the future spouse : 410
 But from this dome my parent queen to chase!
 From me, ye gods! avert such dire disgrace."

But Pallas clouds with intellectual gloom
 The suitors' souls, insensate of their doom!
 A mirthful phrensy seized the fated crowd; 415
 The roofs resound with causeless laughter loud:
 Floating in gore, portentous to survey!
 In each discolour'd vase the viands lay;
 Then down each cheek the tears spontaneous flow,
 And sudden sighs precede approaching wo. 420
 In vision wrapp'd, the Hyperesian seer
 Uprose, and thus divined the vengeance near:

"Oh race to death devote! with Stygian shade
 Each destined peer impending fates invade:
 With tears your wan distorted cheeks are drown'd;
 With sanguine drops the walls are rubied round : 426
 Thick swarms the spacious hall with howling ghosts,
 To people Orcus, and the burning coasts!
 Nor gives the sun his golden orb to roll,
 But universal night usurps the pole !" 430

Yet warn'd in vain, with laughter loud elate
 The peers reproach the sure divine of fate;
 And thus Eurymachus: "The dotard's mind
 To every sense is lost, to reason blind:
 Swift from the dome conduct the slave away; 435
 Let him in open air behold the day."

"Tax not," the Heaven-illuminated seer rejoin'd,
 "Of rage, or folly, my prophetic mind.
 No clouds of error dim the ethereal rays,
 Her equal power each faithful sense obeys. 440
 Unguided hence my trembling steps I bend,
 For hence, before yon hovering deaths descend;

Lest the ripe harvest of revenge begun,
I share the doom ye suitors cannot shun."

This said, to sage Piræus sped the seer, 445
His honour'd host, a welcome inmate there.

O'er the protracted feast the suitors sit,
And aim to wound the prince with pointless wit:
Cries one, with scornful leer and mimic voice,
"Thy charity we praise, but not thy choice ; 450

Why such profusion of indulgence shown
To this poor, timorous, toil-detesting drone ?

That others feeds on planetary schemes,
And pays his host with hideous noonday dreams.
But, prince ! for once at least believe a friend, 455

To some Sicilian mart these courtiers send,
Where, if they yield their freight across the main,
Dear sell the slaves ! demand no greater gain."

Thus jovial they : but naught the prince replies ;
Full on his sire he roll'd his ardent eyes ; 460

Impatient straight to flesh his virgin sword ;
From the wise chief he waits the deathful word.

Nigh in her bright alcove, the pensive queen
To see the circle sat, of all unseen.

Sated at length they rise, and bid prepare 465
An eve repast, with equal cost and care :

But vengeful Pallas, with preventing speed,
A feast proportion'd to their crimes decreed ;
A feast of death, the feasters doom'd to bleed !

BOOK XXI.

ARGUMENT.

The Bending of Ulysses' Bow

PENELOPE, to put an end to the solicitation of the suitors, proposes to marry the person who shall first bend the bow of Ulysses, and shoot through the ringlets—After their attempts have proved ineffectual, Ulysses, taking Eumæus and Philætius apart, discovers himself to them; then returning, desires leave to try his strength at the bow, which, though refused with indignation by the suitors, Penelope and Telemachus cause it to be delivered to his hands—He bends it immediately, and shoots through all the rings—Jupiter at the same instant thunders from heaven—Ulysses accepts the omen, and gives a sign to Telemachus, who stands ready armed at his side.

AND Pallas now, to raise the rivals' fires,
With her own art Penelope inspires :
“ Who now can bend Ulysses' bow, and wing
The well-aim'd arrow through the distant ring,
Shall end the strife, and win the imperial dame ; 5
But discord and black death await the game !”

The prudent queen the lofty stair ascends,
At distance due a virgin train attends ;
A brazen key she held, the handle turn'd,
With steel and polish'd elephant adorn'd : 10
Swift to the inmost room she bent her way,
Where, safe reposed, the royal treasures lay ;
There shone high heap'd the labour'd brass and ore,
And there the bow which great Ulysses bore ;
And there the quiver, where now guiltless slept 15
Those winged deaths that many a matron wept.

This gift, long since when Sparta's shores he trod,
On young Ulysses Iphitus bestow'd :

Beneath Orsilochns's roof they met ;
 One loss was private, one a public debt ; 20
 Messena's state from Ithaca detains
 Three hundred sheep, and all the shepherd swains ;
 And to the youthful prince to urge the laws,
 The king and elders trust their common cause.
 But Iphitus employ'd on other cares, 25
 Search'd the wide country for his wandering mares,
 And mules, the strongest of the labouring kind ;
 Hapless to search ! more hapless still to find !
 For journeying on to Hercules, at length
 That lawless wretch, that man of brutal strength, 30
 Deaf to Heaven's voice, the social rite transgress'd ;
 And for the beauteous mares destroy'd his guest.
 He gave the bow ; and on Ulysses' part
 Received a pointed sword, and missile dart :
 Of luckless friendship on a foreign shore 35
 Their first, last pledges, for they met no more !
 The bow, bequeath'd by this unhappy hand,
 Ulysses bore not from his native land ;
 Nor in the front of battle taught to bend,
 But kept in dear memorial of his friend. 40
 Now gently winding up the fair ascent,
 By many an easy step the matron went ;
 Then o'er the pavement glides with grace divine ;
 (With polish'd oak the level pavements shine ;)
 The folding gates a dazzling light display'd, 45
 With pomp of various architrave o'erlaid.
 The bolt, obedient to the silken string,
 Forsakes the staple as she pulls the ring ;
 The wards respondent to the key turn round ;
 The bars fall back ; the flying valves resound ; 50
 Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,
 So roar'd the lock when it released the spring.
 She moves majestic through the wealthy room,
 Where treasured garments cast a rich perfume ;
 There from the column where aloft it hung, 55
 Reach'd, in its splendid case, the bow unstrung ;

Across her knees she laid the well-known bow,
And pensive sat, and tears began to flow.
To full satiety of grief she mourns,
Then silent to the joyous hall returns, 60
To the proud suitors bears in pensive state
The unbended bow, and arrows wing'd with fate.

Behind her train the polish'd coffer brings,
Which held the alternate brass and silver rings,
Full in the portal the chaste queen appears, 65
And with her veil conceals the coming tears :
On either side awaits a virgin fair ;
While thus the matron, with majestic air :

“ Say you, whom these forbidden walls enclose,
For whom my victims bleed, my vintage flows ; 70
If these neglected, faded charms can move ?
Or is it but a vain pretence, you love ?
If I the prize, if me you seek to wife,
Hear the conditions, and commence the strife.
Who first Ulysses' wondrous bow shall bend, 75
And through twelve ringlets the fleet arrow send,
Him will I follow, and forsake my home,
For him forsake this loved, this wealthy dome,
Long, long the scene of all my past delight,
And still to last, the vision of my night !” 80

Graceful she said, and bade Eumæus show
The rival peers the ringlets and the bow.
From his full eyes the tears unbidden spring,
Touch'd at the dear memorials of his king.
Philæti^{us} too relents, but secret shed 85
The tender drops. Antinous saw, and said :

“ Hence to your fields, ye rustics ! hence away,
Nor stain with grief the pleasures of the day :
Nor to the royal heart recall in vain
The sad remembrance of a perish'd man. 90
Enough her precious tears already flow ;
Or share the feast with due respect, or go
To weep abroad, and leave to us the bow :
No vulgar task ! Ill suits this courtly crew
That stubborn horn which brave Ulysses drew. 95

I well remember (for I gazed him o'er
While yet a child) what majesty he bore!
And still, all infant as I was, retain
The port, the strength, the grandeur of the man."

He said, but in his soul fond joys arise, 100
And his proud hopes already win the prize.

"To speed the flying shaft through every ring,
Wretch! is not thine: the arrows of the king
Shall end those hopes, and fate is on the wing!"

Then thus Telemachus: "Some god I find 105
With pleasing phrensy has possess'd my mind;

When a loved mother threatens to depart,
Why with this ill-timed gladness leaps my heart?

Come then, ye suitors! and dispute a prize
Richer than all the Achaian state supplies, 110

Than all proud Argos, or Mycæna knows,
Than all our isles or continents enclose:

A woman matchless, and almost divine,
Fit for the praise of every tongue but mine.

No more excuses then, no more delay; 115
Haste to the trial: lo! I lead the way.

I too may try, and if this arm can wing
The feather'd arrow through the destined ring,

Then if no happier knight the conquest boast,
I shall not sorrow for a mother lost; 120

But, bless'd in her, possess these arms alone,
Heir of my father's strength, as well as throne."

He spoke; then rising, his broad sword unbound,
And cast his purple garment on the ground.

A trench he open'd; in a line he placed 125
The level axes, and the points made fast.

(His perfect skill the wondering gazers eyed,
The game as yet unseen, as yet untried.)

Then with a manly pace he took his stand,
And grasp'd the bow, and twang'd it in his hand. 130

Three times, with beating heart, he made essay;
Three times, unequal to the task, gave way;

A modest boldness on his cheek appear'd;
And thrice he hoped, and thrice again he fear'd.

The fourth had drawn it. The great sire with joy 135
Beheld, but with a sign forbade the boy.

His ardour straight the obedient prince suppress'd,
And, artful, thus the suitor train address'd:

“ Oh lay the cause on youth yet immature !
(For Heaven forbid such weakness should endure !)
How shall this arm, unequal to the bow, 141
Retort an insult or repel a foe ?

But you, whom Heaven with better nerves has bless'd,
Accept the trial, and the prize contest.”

He cast the bow before him, and apart 145
Against the polish'd quiver propp'd the dart.

Resuming then his seat, Epitheus' son,
The bold Antinous, to the rest begun :
From where the goblet first begins to flow,
From right to left in order take the bow, 150
And prove your several strengths.” The princes
heard,

And first Leiodes, blameless priest, appear'd :
The eldest born of CEnops' noble race,
Who next the goblet held his holy place ;
He, only he, of all the suitor throng, 155

Their deeds detested, and abjured the wrong.
With tender hands the stubborn horn he strains ;
The stubborn horn resisted all his pains !

Already in despair he gives it o'er :
“ Take it who will,” he cries, “ I strive no more. 160
What numerous deaths attend this fatal bow !

What souls and spirits shall it send below !
Better, indeed, to die, and fairly give
Nature her debt, than disappointed live,
With each new sun to some new hope a prey, 165
Yet still to-morrow falser than to-day.

How long in vain Penelope we sought !
This bow shall ease us of that idle thought,
And send us with some humbler wife to live,
Whom gold shall gain, or destiny shall give.” 170

Thus speaking, on the floor the bow he placed ;
(With rich inlay the various floor was graced ;)

At distance far the feather'd shaft he throws,
And to the seat returns from whence he rose.

To him Antinous thus with fury said : 175
“What words ill-omen'd from thy lips have fled?

Thy coward function ever is in fear ;
Those arms are dreadful which thou canst not bear.
Why should this bow be fatal to the brave ?

Because the priest is born a peaceful slave. 180
Mark then what others can.” He ended there,

And bade Melanthius a vast pile prepare :

He gives it instant flame, then fast beside

Spreads o'er an ample board a bullock's hide.

With melted lard they soak the weapon o'er, 185
Chafe every knot, and supple every pore.

Vain all their art, and all their strength as vain ;

The bow inflexible resists their pain.

The force of great Eurymachus alone

And bold Antinous, yet untried, unknown : 190

Those only now remain'd ; but those confess'd

Of all the train the mightiest and the best.

Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,

The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.

The king observes them, he the hall forsakes, 195

And, past the limits of the court, o'ertakes.

Then thus with accent mild Ulysses spoke :

“Ye faithful guardians of the herd and flock!

Shall I the secret of my breast conceal,

Or (as my soul now dictates) shall I tell ? 200

Say, should some favouring god restore again

The lost Ulysses to his native reign,

How beat your hearts ? what aid would you afford

To the proud suitors, or your ancient lord ?”

Philætius thus : “Oh were thy word not vain ! 205
Would mighty Jove restore that man again !

These aged sinews, with new vigour strung,

In his bless'd cause should emulate the young.”

With equal vows Eumæus too implored

Each power above, with wishes for his lord. 210

He saw their secret souls, and thus began :
“ Those vows the gods accord, behold the man !
Your own Ulysses ! twice ten years detain’d
By woes and wanderings from this hapless land .
At length he comes ; but comes despised, unknown,
And finding faithful you, and you alone. 216
All else have cast him from their very thought,
Ev’n in their wishes and their prayers forgot !
Hear then, my friends : If Jove this arm succeed,
And give yon impious revellers to bleed, 220
My care shall be to bless your future lives
With large possessions, and with faithful wives ;
Fast by my palace shall your domes ascend,
And each on young Telemachus attend,
And each be call’d his brother and my friend. 225
To give you firmer faith, now trust your eye ;
Lo, the broad scar indented on my thigh,
When with Autolycus’s sons of yore,
On Parnass’ top I chased the tusky boar.”
His ragged vest then drawn aside disclosed 230
The sign conspicuous, and the scar exposed :
Eager they view’d ; with joy they stood amazed :
With tearful eyes o’er all their master gazed :
Around his neck their longing arms they cast, 234
His head, his shoulders, and his knees embraced :
Tears follow’d tears ; no word was in their power ;
In solemn silence fell the kindly shower.
The king too weeps, the king too grasps their hands,
And moveless, as a marble fountain, stands.
Thus had their joy wept down the setting sun, 240
But first the wise man ceased, and thus begun :
“ Enough—on other cares your thought employ,
For danger waits on all untimely joy.
Full many foes, and fierce, observe us near ;
Some may betray, and yonder walls may hear. 245
Re-enter then, not all at once, but stay
Some moments you, and let me lead the way.
To me, neglected as I am, I know
The haughty suitors will deny the bow ;

But thou, Eumæus, as 'tis borne away, 250
Thy master's weapon to his hand convey.
At every portal let some matron wait,
And each lock fast the well-compacted gate :
Close let them keep, whate'er invades their ear ;
Though arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear.
To thy strict charge, Philætius, we consign 256
The court's main gate : to guard that pass be thine."

This said, he first return'd ; the faithful swains
At distance follow, as their king ordains.
Before the flame Eurymachus now stands, 260
And turns the bow, and chafes it with his hands :
Still the tough bow unmoved. The lofty man
Sigh'd from his mighty soul, and thus began :

" I mourn the common cause : for, oh, my friends !
On me, on all, what grief, what shame attends ! 265
Not the lost nuptials can affect me more ;
(For Greece has beauteous dames on every shore ;)
But baffled thus ! confess'd so far below
Ulysses' strength, as not to bend his bow !
How shall all ages our attempt deride ! 270
Our weakness scorn !" Antinous thus replied :

" Not so, Eurymachus ! that no man draws
The wondrous bow, attend another cause.
Sacred to Phœbus is the solemn day,
Which thoughtless we in games would waste away :
Till the next dawn this ill-timed strife forego, 276
And here leave fix'd the ringlets in a row.
Now bid the sewer approach, and let us join
In due libations, and in rites divine ;
So end our night : before the day shall spring, 280
The choicest offerings let Melanthius bring ;
Let then to Phœbus' name the fatted thighs
Feed the rich smokes, high curling to the skies.
So shall the patron of these arts bestow
(For his the gift) the skill to bend the bow." 285

They heard well pleased : the ready heralds bring
The cleansing waters from the limpid spring :

The goblet high with rosy wine they crown'd,
In order circling to the peers around.
That rite complete, uprose the thoughtful man, 290
And thus his meditated scheme began :
 " If what I ask your noble minds approve,
Ye peers and rivals in the royal love !
Chief, if it hurt not great Antinous' ear,
(Whose sage decision I with wonder hear,) 295
And if Eurymachus the motion please :
Give Heaven this day, and rest the bow in peace.
To-morrow let your arms dispute the prize,
And take it he, the favour'd of the skies !
But, since till then this trial you delay, 300
Trust it one moment to my hands to-day :
Fain would I prove before your judging eyes,
What once I was, whom wretched you despise ;
If yet this arm its ancient force retain ;
Or if my woes, (a long continued train,) 305
And wants, and insults, make me less than man."
Rage flash'd in lightning from the suitors' eyes,
Yet mix'd with terror at the bold emprise.
Antinous then : " Oh miserable guest !
Is common sense quite banish'd from thy breast ?
Sufficed it not, within the palace placed, 311
To sit distinguish'd, with our presence graced,
Admitted here with princes to confer,
A man unknown, a needy wanderer ?
To copious wine this insolence we owe, 315
And much thy betters wine can overthrow :
The great Eurytion when this phrensy stung,
Pirithous' roofs with frantic riot rung :
Boundless the centaur raged ; till one and all
The heroes rose, and dragg'd him from the hall ; 320
His nose they shorten'd, and his ears they slit,
And sent him sober'd home, with better wit.
Hence with long war the double race was cursed,
Fatal to all, but to the aggressor first.
Such fate I prophesy our guest attends, 325
If here this interdicted bow he bends :

Nor shall these walls such insolence contain ;
 The first fair wind transports him o'er the main ;
 Where Echetus to death the guilty brings :
 (The worst of mortals, ev'n the worst of kings.) 330
 Better than that, if thou approve our cheer,
 Cease the mad strife, and share our bounty here."

To this the queen her just dislike express'd :
 "'Tis impious, prince, to harm the stranger guest,
 Base to insult who bears a suppliant's name, 335
 And some respect Telemachus may claim.
 What if the immortals on the man bestow
 Sufficient strength to draw the mighty bow ?
 Shall I, a queen, by rival chiefs adored,
 Accept a wandering stranger for my lord ? 340
 A hope so idle never touch'd his brain :
 Then ease your bosoms of a fear so vain.
 Far be he banish'd from this stately scene
 Who wrongs his princess with a thought so mean."

"Oh fair ! and wisest of so fair a kind !" 345
 Respectful thus Eurymachus rejoin'd,
 "Moved by no weak surmise, but sense of shame,
 We dread the all-arraigning voice of Fame :
 We dread the censure of the meanest slave,
 The weakest woman : all can wrong the brave. 350
 'Behold what wretches to the bed pretend
 Of that brave chief, whose bow they could not bend !
 In came a beggar of the strolling crew,
 And did what all those princes could not do.'
 Thus will the common voice our deed defame, 355
 And thus posterity upbraid our name."

To whom the queen : "If fame engage your
 views,
 Forbear those acts which infamy pursues ;
 Wrong and oppression no renown can raise ;
 Know, friend ! that virtue is the path to praise. 360
 The stature of our guest, his port, his face,
 Speak him descended from no vulgar race.
 To him the bow, as he desires, convey ;
 And to his hand if Phœbus give the day,

Hence, to reward his merit, he shall bear 365
 A two-edged falchion and a shining spear,
 Embroider'd sandals, a rich cloak and vest,
 A safe conveyance to his port of rest."

"Oh royal mother, ever honour'd name!
 Permit me," cries Telemachus, "to claim 370
 A son's just right. No Grecian prince but I
 Has power this bow to grant, or to deny.
 Of all that Ithaca's rough hills contain,
 And all wide Elis' courser-breeding plain,
 To me alone my father's arms descend; 375
 And mine alone they are, to give or lend.
 Retire, oh queen! thy household task resume,
 Tend, with thy maids, the labours of thy loom;
 The bow, the darts, and arms of chivalry,
 These cares to man belong, and most to me." 380

Mature beyond his years, the queen admired
 His sage reply, and with her train retired;
 There in her chamber as she sat apart,
 Revolved his words, and placed them in her heart.
 On her Ulysses then she fixed her soul; 385
 Down her fair cheek the tears abundant roll,
 Till gentle Pallas, piteous of her cries,
 In slumber closed her silver-streaming eyes.

Now through the press the bow Eumæus bore,
 And all was riot, noise, and wild uproar. 390

"Hold! lawless rustic! whither wilt thou go?
 To whom, insensate, dost thou bear the bow?
 Exiled for this to some sequester'd den,
 Far from the sweet society of men,
 To thy own dogs a prey thou shalt be made; 395
 If Heaven and Phœbus lend the suitors aid."

Thus they. Aghast he laid the weapon down,
 But bold Telemachus thus urged him on:
 "Proceed, false slave, and slight their empty words:
 What! hopes the fool to please so many lords? 400
 Young as I am, thy prince's vengeful hand
 Stretch'd forth in wrath shall drive thee from the
 land.

Oh ! could the vigour of this arm as well
 The oppressive suitors from my walls expel !
 Then what a shoal of lawless men should go 405
 To fill with tumult the dark courts below !”

The suitors with a scornful smile survey
 The youth, indulging in the genial day.
 Eumæus, thus encouraged, hastes to bring
 The strifeful bow, and gives it to the king. 410
 Old Euryclea calling then aside,
 “Hear what Telemachus enjoins,” he cried :
 “At every portal let some matron wait,
 And each lock fast the well-compacted gate ;
 And if unusual sounds invade their ear, 415
 If arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear,
 Let none to call or issue forth presume,
 But close attend the labours of the loom.”

Her prompt obedience on his order waits ;
 Closed in an instant were the palace gates. 420
 In the same moment forth Philæti^{us} flies,
 Secures the court, and with a cable ties
 The utmost gate ; (the cable strongly wrought
 Of Byblos’ reed, a ship from Egypt brought ;)
 Then unperceived and silent at the board 425
 His seat he takes, his eyes upon his lord.

And now his well-known bow the master bore,
 Turn’d on all sides, and view’d it o’er and o’er ;
 Lest time or worms had done the weapon wrong,
 Its owner absent, and untried so long. 430
 While some deriding : “How he turns the bow !
 Some other like it sure the man must know,
 Or else would copy ; or in bows he deals ;
 Perhaps he makes them, or perhaps he steals.”
 “Heaven to this wretch,” another cried, “be kind !
 And bless, in all to which he stands inclined, 436
 With such good fortune as he now shall find.”

Heedless he heard them : but disdain’d reply ;
 The bow perusing with exactest eye.
 Then, as some heavenly minstrel, taught to sing 440
 High notes responsive to the trembling string,

To some new strain when he adapts the lyre,
Or the dumb lute refits with vocal wire,
Relaxes, strains, and draws them to and fro ;
So the great master drew the mighty bow : 445
And drew with ease. One hand aloft display'd
The bending horn, and one the string essay'd.
From his essaying hand the string let fly
Twang'd short and sharp like the shrill swallow's
cry.

A general horror ran through all the race, 450
Sunk was each heart, and pale was every face.
Signs from above ensued : the unfolding sky
In lightning burst ; Jove thunder'd from on high.
Fired at the call of heaven's almighty lord,
He snatch'd the shaft that glitter'd on the board : 455
(Fast by, the rest lay sleeping in the sheath,
But soon to fly, the messengers of death.)

Now sitting as he was, the cord he drew,
Through every ringlet levelling his view ;
Then notch'd the shaft, released, and gave it wing ;
The whizzing arrow vanish'd from the string, 461
Sung on direct, and threaded every ring.
The solid gate its fury scarcely bounds ;
Pierced through and through, the solid gate resounds.
Then to the prince : " Nor have I wrought thee
shame ;

Nor err'd this hand unfaithful to its aim ; 466
Nor prov'd the toil too hard ; nor have I lost
That ancient vigour, once my pride and boast.
Ill I deserved these haughty peers' disdain ;
Now let them comfort their dejected train, 470
In sweet repast their present hour employ,
Nor wait till evening for the genial joy :
Then to the lute's soft voice prolong the night ;
Music, the banquet's most refined delight."

He said, then gave a nod ; and at the word 475
Telemachus girds on his shining sword.
Fast by his father's side he takes his stand :
The beamy javelin lightens in his hand.

BOOK XXII.

ARGUMENT.

The Death of the Suitors.

ULYSSES begins the slaughter of the suitors by the death of Antinous—He declares himself, and lets fly his arrows at the rest—Telemachus assists, and brings arms for his father, himself, Eumæus, and Philætius—Melanthius does the same for the wooers—Minerva encourages Ulysses in the shape of Mentor—The suitors are all slain, only Medon and Themius are spared—Melanthius and the unfaithful servants are executed—The rest acknowledge their master with all demonstrations of joy.

THEN fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode ;
Stripp'd of his rags, he blazed out like a god.
Full in their face the lifted bow he bore,
And quiver'd deaths, a formidable store ;
Before his feet the rattling shower he threw, 5
And thus, terrific, to the suitor crew :

“ One venturous game this hand has won to-day,
Another, princes, yet remains to play ;
Another mark our arrow must attain.
Phœbus, assist ! nor be the labour vain.” 10

Swift as the word the parting arrow sings,
And bears thy fate, Antinous, on its wings:
Wretch that he was, of unprophetic soul!
High in his hands he rear'd the golden bowl!
Ev'n then to drain it lengthen'd out his breath; 15
Changed to the deep, the bitter draught of death:
For fate who fear'd amid a feastful band?
And fate to numbers, by a single hand?
Full through his throat Ulysses' weapon pass'd,
And pierced the neck. He falls, and breathes his last.

The tumbling goblet the wide floor o'erflows, 21
A stream of gore burst spouting from his nose ;
Grim in convulsive agonies he sprawls :
Before him spurn'd the loaded table falls,
And spreads the pavement with a mingled flood 25
Of floating meats, and wine, and human blood.
Amazed, confounded, as they saw him fall,
Up rose the throng tumultuous round the hall ;
O'er all the dome they cast a haggard eye,
Each look'd for arms : in vain ; no arms were nigh.
" Aim'st thou at princes ? " all amazed they said ; 31
" Thy last of games unhappy hast thou play'd ;
Thy erring shaft has made our bravest bleed,
And death, unlucky guest, attends thy deed :
Vultures shall tear thee." Thus incensed they
 spoke, 35
While each to chance ascribed the wondrous stroke :
Blind as they were : for death ev'n now invades
His destined prey, and wraps them all in shades.
Then, grimly frowning, with a dreadful look,
That wither'd all their hearts, Ulysses spoke : 40
" Dogs, ye have had your day ! ye fear'd no more
Ulysses vengeful from the Trojan shore ;
While, to your lust and spoil a guardless prey,
Our house, our wealth, our helpless handmaids lay :
Not so content, with bolder phrensy fired, 45
Ev'n to our bed presumptuous you aspired :
Laws or divine or human fail'd to move,
Or shame of men, or dread of gods above ;
Heedless alike of infamy or praise,
Or Fame's eternal voice in future days : 50
The hour of vengeance, wretches, now is come ;
Impending fate is yours, and instant doom."
Thus dreadful he. Confused the suitors stood,
From their pale cheeks recedes the flying blood :
Trembling they sought their guilty heads to hide, 55
Alone the bold Eurymachus replied :
" If, as thy words import," he thus began,
Ulysses lives, and thou the mighty man,

Great are thy wrongs, and much hast thou sustain'd
In thy spoil'd palace, and exhausted land ; 60
The cause and author of those guilty deeds,
Lo ! at thy feet unjust Antinous bleeds.

Not love, but wild ambition was his guide ;
To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide ;
These were his aims ; but juster Jove denied. 65
Since cold in death the offender lies, oh spare
Thy suppliant people, and receive their prayer !
Brass, gold, and treasures shall the spoil defray,
Two hundred oxen every prince shall pay :
The waste of years refunded in a day. 70

Till then thy wrath is just." Ulysses burn'd
With high disdain, and sternly thus return'd :

" All, all the treasures that enrich'd our throne
Before your rapines, join'd with all your own,
If offer'd, vainly should for mercy call ; 75
'Tis you that offer, and I scorn them all ;
Your blood is my demand, your lives the prize,
Till pale as yonder wretch each suitor lies.
Hence with those coward terms ; or fight or fly ;
This choice is left you, to resist or die : 80

And die I trust ye shall." He sternly spoke :
With guilty fears the pale assembly shook.

Alone Eurymachus exhorts the train :
" Yon archer, comrades, will not shoot in vain ;
But from the threshold shall his darts be sped, 85
(Whoe'er he be,) till every prince lie dead !

Be mindful of yourselves, draw forth your swords,
And to his shafts obtend these ample boards :
(So need compels.) Then, all united strive
The bold invader from his post to drive ; 90
The city roused shall to our rescue haste,
And this mad archer soon have shot his last."

Swift as he spoke, he drew his traitor sword,
And like a lion rush'd against his lord ;
The wary chief the rushing foe repress'd, 95
Who met the point and forced it in his breast :

His falling hand deserts the lifted sword,
 And prone he falls extended o'er the board !
 Before him wide, in mix'd effusion roll
 The untasted viands, and the jovial bowl. 100
 Full through his liver pass'd the mortal wound,
 With dying rage his forehead beats the ground ;
 He spurn'd the seat with fury as he fell,
 And the fierce soul to darkness dived, and hell.
 Next bold Amphinomus his arms extends 105
 To force the pass ; the godlike man defends.
 Thy spear, Telemachus, prevents the attack,
 The brazen weapon driving through his back,
 Thence through his breast its bloody passage tore ;
 Flat falls he thundering on the marble floor, 110
 And his crush'd forehead marks the stone with gore.
 He left his javelin in the dead, for fear
 The long encumbrance of the weighty spear
 To the fierce foe advantage might afford,
 To rush between and use the shorten'd sword. 115
 With speedy ardour to his sire he flies,
 And, " Arm, great father ! arm," in haste he cries.
 " Lo hence I run for other arms to wield,
 For missile javelins, and for helm and shield ;
 Fast by our side let either faithful swain 120
 In arms attend us, and their part sustain."
 " Haste, and return," Ulysses made reply,
 " While yet the auxiliar shafts this hand supply ;
 Lest thus alone, encounter'd by a host,
 Driven from the gate, the important pass be lost."
 With speed Telemachus obeys, and flies 126
 Where piled in heaps the royal armour lies :
 Four brazen helmets, eight refulgent spears,
 And four broad bucklers to his sire he bears :
 At once in brazen panoply they shone, 130
 At once each servant braced his armour on ;
 Around their king a faithful guard they stand,
 While yet each shaft flew deathful from his hand :
 Chief after chief expired at every wound,
 And swell'd the bleeding mountain on the ground.

Soon as his store of flying fates was spent, 136
 Against the wall he set the bow unbent ;
 And now his shoulders bear the massy shield,
 And now his hands two beamy javelins wield :
 He frowns beneath his nodding plume that play'd
 O'er the high crest, and cast a dreadful shade. 141

There stood a window near, whence looking down
 From o'er the porch appear'd the subject town.
 A double strength of valves secured the place,
 A high and narrow, but the only pass ; 145
 The cautious king, with all-preventing care,
 To guard that outlet, placed Eumæus there :
 When Agelaus thus : " Has none the sense
 To mount yon window, and alarm from thence
 The neighbour town ? the town shall force the door,
 And this bold archer soon shall shoot no more." 151

Melanthius then : " That outlet to the gate
 So near adjoins, that one may guard the strait.
 But other methods of defence remain ;
 Myself with arms can furnish all the train ; 155
 Stores from the royal magazine I bring,
 And their own darts shall pierce the prince and
 king."

He said ; and mounting up the lofty stairs,
 Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets
 bears :

All arm, and sudden round the hall appears 160
 A blaze of bucklers, and a wood of spears.

The hero stands oppress'd with mighty wo,
 On every side he sees the labour grow :
 " Oh cursed event ! and oh unlook'd-for aid !
 Melanthius or the women have betray'd— 165
 Oh my dear son !" the father with a sigh,
 Then ceased ; the filial virtue made reply :

" Falsehood is folly, and 'tis just to own
 Thy fault committed : this was mine alone ;
 My haste neglected yonder door to bar, 170
 And hence the villain has supplied their war.

Run, good Eumæus, then, and (what before
I thoughtless err'd in) well secure that door :
Learn, if by female fraud this deed were done,
Or (as my thought misgives) by Dolius' son." 175

While yet they spoke, in quest of arms again
To the high chamber stole the faithless swain,
Not unobserved. Eumæus watchful eyed,
And thus address'd Ulysses near his side :

"The miscreant we suspected takes that way ; 180
Him, if this arm be powerful, shall I slay ?
Or drive him hither, to receive the meed
From thy own hand, of this detested deed ?"

"Not so," replied Ulysses ; "leave him there,
For us sufficient is another care : 185

Within the structure of this palace wall
To keep enclosed his masters till they fall.
Go you, and seize the felon ; backward bind
His arms and legs, and fix a plank behind ;
On this his body by strong cords extend, 190
And on a column near the roof suspend ;
So studied tortures his vile days shall end."

The ready swains obey'd with joyful haste,
Behind the felon unperceived they pass'd,
As round the room in quest of arms he goes : 195
(The half-shut door conceal'd his lurking foes :)
One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield
Which old Laertes wont in youth to wield,
Cover'd with dust, with dryness chapp'd and worn,
The brass corroded, and the leather torn. 200

Thus laden, o'er the threshold as he stepp'd,
Fierce on the villain from each side they leap'd,
Back by the hair the trembling dastard drew,
And down reluctant on the pavement threw.
Active and pleased the zealous swains fulfil 205

At every point their master's rigid will :
First, fast behind, his hands and feet they bound,
Then straiten'd cords involved his body round ;
So drawn aloft, athwart the column tied,
The howling felon swung from side to side. 210

Eumæus scoffing then with keen disdain :
 “ There pass thy pleasing night, oh gentle swain !
 On that soft pillow, from that envied height,
 First mayst thou see the springing dawn of light ;
 So timely rise, when morning streaks the east, 215
 To drive thy victims to the suitors’ feast.”

This said, they left him, tortured as he lay,
 Secured the door, and hasty strode away :
 Each, breathing death, resumed his dangerous post
 Near great Ulysses ; four against a host. 220
 When lo ! descending to her hero’s aid,
 Jove’s daughter Pallas, war’s triumphant maid :
 In Mentor’s friendly form she join’d his side ;
 Ulysses saw, and thus with transport cried :

“ Come, ever welcome, and thy succour lend ; 225
 Oh every sacred name in one ! my friend !
 Early we loved, and long our loves have grown ;
 Whate’er through life’s whole series I have done
 Or good, or grateful, now to mind recall,
 And, aiding this one hour, repay it all.” 230

Thus he ; but pleasing hopes his bosom warm
 Of Pallas latent in the friendly form.
 The adverse host the phantom warrior eyed,
 And first, loud threatening Agelaus cried :

“ Mentor, beware, nor let that tongue persuade 235
 Thy frantic arm to lend Ulysses aid ;
 Our force successful shall our threat make good,
 And with the sire and son’s commix thy blood.
 What hopest thou here ? Thee first the sword shall
 slay,

Then lop thy whole posterity away ; 240
 Far hence thy banish’d consort shall we send ;
 With his, thy forfeit lands and treasures blend ;
 Thus, and thus only, shalt thou join thy friend.”

His barbarous insult ev’n the goddess fires,
 Who thus the warrior to revenge inspires : 245
 “ Art thou Ulysses ? where then shall we find
 The patient body and the constant mind ?

That courage, once the Trojans' daily dread,
Known nine long years, and felt by heroes dead ?
And where that conduct, which revenged the lust
Of Priam's race, and laid proud Troy in dust ? 251
If this, when Helen was the cause, were done,
What for thy country now, thy queen, thy son ?
Rise then in combat, at my side attend ;
Observe what vigour gratitude can lend, 255
And foes how weak, opposed against a friend !"

She spoke ; but willing longer to survey
The sire and son's great acts, withheld the day ;
By further toils decreed the brave to try,
And level poised the wings of victory ; 260
Then with a change of form eludes their sight,
Perch'd like a swallow on a rafter's height,
And unperceived enjoys the rising fight.

Damastor's son, bold Agelaus, leads
The guilty war, Eurynomous succeeds ; 265
With these, Pisander, great Polycctor's son,
Sage Polybus, and stern Amphimedon,
With Demoptolemus : these six survive ;
The best of all, the shafts had left alive.
Amid the carnage, desperate as they stand, 270
Thus Agelaus roused the lagging band :

" The hour is come, when yon fierce man no more
With bleeding princes shall bestrew the floor.
Lo ! Mentor leaves him with an empty boast ;
The four remain, but four against a host. 275
Let each at once discharge the deadly dart,
One sure of six shall reach Ulysses' heart ;
The rest must perish, their great leader slain :
Thus shall one stroke the glory lost regain."

Then all at once their mingled lances threw, 280
And thirsty all of one man's blood they flew :
In vain ! Minerva turn'd them with her breath,
And scatter'd short, or wide, the points of death !
With deaden'd sound one on the threshold falls,
One strikes the gate, one rings against the walls : 285

The storm pass'd innocent. The godlike man
Now loftier trod, and dreadful thus began :

“ Tis now, brave friends, our turn, at once to throw
(So speed them Heaven) our javelins at the foe.
'That impious race to all their past misdeeds 290
Would add our blood, injustice still proceeds.”

He spoke : at once their fiery lances flew :
Great Demoptolemus Ulysses slew ;
Euryades received the prince's dart ;
The goatherd's quiver'd in Pisander's heart ; 295
Fierce Elatus, by thine, Eumæus, falls ;
Their fall in thunder echoes round the walls.
The rest retreat : the victors now advance,
Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.
Again the foe discharge the steely shower ; 300
Again made frustrate by the virgin power.
Some, turn'd by Pallas, on the threshold fall,
Some wound the gate, some ring against the wall ;
Some weak, or ponderous with the brazen head,
Drop harmless on the pavement, sounding dead. 305

Then bold Amphimedon his javelin cast ;
Thy hand, Telemachus, it lightly razed :
And from Ctesippus' arm the spear elanced
On good Eumæus' shield and shoulder glanced :
Not lessen'd of their force, (so light the wound,) 310
Each sung along, and dropp'd upon the ground.
Fate doom'd thee next, Eurydamus, to bear
Thy death, ennobled by Ulysses' spear.
By the bold son Amphimedon was slain,
And Polybus renown'd, the faithful swain. 315
Pierced through the breast the rude Ctesippus bled,
And thus Philætiæ gloried o'er the dead :

“ There end thy pompous vaunts, and high disdain ;
Oh sharp in scandal, voluble, and vain !
How weak is mortal pride ! To Heaven alone 320
The event of actions and our fates are known :
Scoffer, behold what gratitude we hear :
The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.”

Ulysses brandish'd high his vengeful steel,
And Damastorides that instant fell; 325
Fast by Leocritus expiring lay,
The prince's javelin tore its bloody way
Through all his bowels: down he tumbles prone,
His batter'd front and brains besmear the stone.

Now Pallas shines confess'd! aloft she spreads
The arm of vengeance o'er their guilty heads; 331
The dreadful ægis blazes in their eye;
Amazed they see, they tremble and they fly:
Confused, distracted, through the rooms they fling;
Like oxen madden'd by the breeze's sting, 335
When sultry days, and long, succeed the gentle
spring.

Not half so keen fierce vultures of the chase
Stoop from the mountains on the feather'd race,
When, the wide field extended snares beset,
With conscious dread they shun the quivering net:
No help, no flight; but wounded every way, 341
Headlong they drop; the fowlers seize the prey:
On all sides thus they double wound on wound,
In prostrate heaps the wretches beat the ground,
Unmanly shrieks precede each dying groan, 345
And a red deluge floats the reeking stone.

Leiodes first before the victor falls:
The wretched augur thus for mercy calls:
"Oh gracious hear, nor let thy suppliant bleed;
Still undishonour'd, or by word or deed, 350
Thy house, for me, remains; by me repress'd
Full oft was check'd the injustice of the rest:
Averse they heard me when I counsell'd well,
Their hearts were harden'd, and they justly fell.
Oh, spare an augur's consecrated head, 355
Nor add the blameless to the guilty dead."

"Priest as thou art! for that detested band
Thy lying prophecies deceived the land;
Against Ulysses have thy vows been made,
For them thy daily orisons were paid: 360

Yet more, ev'n to our bed thy pride aspires :
One common crime one common fate requires."

Thus speaking, from the ground the sword he took
Which Agelaus' dying hand forsook :
Full through his neck the weighty falchion sped : 365
Along the pavement roll'd the muttering head.

Phemius alone the hand of vengeance spared,
Phemius the sweet, the Heaven-instructed bard.
Beside the gate the reverend minstrel stands ;
The lyre now silent trembling in his hands ; 370
Dubious to supplicate the chief, or fly
To Jove's inviolable altar nigh,
Where oft Laertes holy vows had paid,
And oft Ulysses smoking victims laid.
His honour'd harp with care he first set down, 375
Between the laver and the silver throne ;
Then prostrate stretch'd before the dreadful man,
Persuasive, thus, with accent soft began :

" Oh king ! to mercy be thy soul inclined,
And spare the poet's ever-gentle kind. 380
A deed like this thy future fame would wrong,
For dear to gods and men is sacred song.
Self-taught I sing ; by Heaven, and Heaven alone,
The genuine seeds of poesy are sown :
And (what the gods bestow) the lofty lay, 385
To gods alone and godlike worth we pay.
Save then the poet, and thyself reward ;
'Tis thine to merit, mine is to record.
That here I sung, was force, and not desire :
This hand reluctant touch'd the warbling fire : 390
And let thy son attest, nor sordid pay,
Nor servile flattery stain'd the moral lay."

The moving words Telemachus attends,
His sire approaches, and the bard defends.
" Oh mix not, father, with those impious dead 395
The man divine ; forbear that sacred head ;
Medon, the herald, too, our arms may spare,
Medon, who made my infancy his care ;

If yet he breathes, permit thy son to give
Thus much to gratitude, and bid him live." 400

Beneath a table, trembling with dismay,
Couch'd close to earth, unhappy Medon lay,
Wrapp'd in a new-slain ox's ample hide ;
Swift at the word he cast his screen aside,
Sprung to the prince, embraced his knee with tears,
And thus with grateful voice address'd his ears : 406

" Oh prince ! oh friend ! lo here thy Medon stands :
Ah stop the hero's unresisted hands,
Incensed too justly by that impious brood
Whose guilty glories now are set in blood." 410

To whom Ulysses with a pleasing eye :
" Be bold, on friendship and my son rely ;
Live, an example for the world to read,
How much more safe the good than evil deed :
Thou with the Heaven-taught bard in peace resort
From blood and carnage to yon open court : 416
Me other work requires." With timorous awe
From the dire scene the exempted two withdraw,
Scarce sure of life, look round, and trembling move
To the bright altars of Protector Jove." 420

Meanwhile Ulysses search'd the dome, to find
If yet there live of all the offending kind.
Not one ! complete the bloody tale he found,
All steep'd in blood, all grasping on the ground.
So, when by hollow shores the fisher train 425
Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main,
And scarce the mesky toils the copious draught
contain,

All naked of their element, and bare,
The fishes pant, and gasp in thinner air ;
Wide o'er the sands are spread the stiffening prey,
Till the warm sun exhales their soul away. 431

And now the king commands his son to call
Old Euryclea to the deathful hall :
The son observant not a moment stays ;
The aged governess with speed obeys ; 435

The sounding portals instant they display ;
The matron moves, the prince directs the way.
On heaps of death the stern Ulysses stood,
All black with dust, and cover'd thick with blood.
So the grim lion from the slaughter comes, 440
Dreadful he glares, and terribly he foams,
His breast with marks of carnage painted o'er,
His jaws all dropping with the bull's black gore.

Soon as her eyes the welcome object met,
The guilty fall'n, the mighty deed complete, 445
A scream of joy her feeble voice essay'd :
The hero check'd her, and composedly said ;

“ Woman, experienced as thou art, control
Indecent joy, and feast thy secret soul.
To insult the dead is cruel and unjust ; 450
Fate and their crime have sunk them to the dust.
Nor heeded these the censure of mankind,
The good and bad were equal in their mind.
Justly the price of worthlessness they paid,
And each now wails an unlamented shade. 455
But thou sincere ! oh Euryclea, say,
What maids dishonour us, and what obey ?”

Then she : “ In these thy kingly walls remain
(My son) full fifty of the handmaid train,
Taught by my care, to cull the fleece or weave, 460
And servitude with pleasing tasks deceive ;
Of these, twice six pursue their wicked way,
Nor me, nor chaste Penelope obey ;
Nor fits it that Telemachus command
(Young as he is) his mother's female band. 465
Hence to the upper chambers let me fly,
Where slumbers soft now close the royal eye ;
There wake her with the news,” the matron cried.

“ Not so,” Ulysses, more sedate, replied,
“ Bring first the crew who wrought these guilty
deeds.” 470

In haste the matron parts : the king proceeds :

“ Now to dispose the dead, the care remains
To you, my son, and you, my faithful swains ;

The offending females to that task we doom,
 To wash, to scent, to purify the room : 475
 These (every table cleansed, and every throne,
 And all the melancholy labour done)
 Drive to yon court, without the palace wall,
 There the revenging sword shall smite them all ;
 So with the suitors let them mix in dust, 480
 Stretch'd in a long oblivion of their lust."

He said : the lamentable train appear,
 Each vents a groan, and drops a tender tear :
 Each heaved her mournful burden, and beneath
 The porch deposed the ghastly heap of death. 485
 The chief severe, compelling each to move,
 Urged the dire task imperious from above :
 With thirsty sponge they rub the tables o'er ;
 (The swains unite their toil ;) the walls, the floor
 Wash'd with the effusive wave, are purged of gore.
 Once more the palace set in fair array, 491
 To the base court the females take their way ;
 There compass'd close, between the dome and wall,
 (Their life's last scene,) they trembling wait their
 fall. 495

Then thus the prince : "To these shall we afford
 A fate so pure, as by the martial sword ?
 To these, the nightly prostitutes to shame,
 And base revilers of our house and name ?"

Thus speaking, on the circling wall he strung
 A ship's tough cable, from a column hung ; 500
 Near the high top he strain'd it strongly round,
 Whence no contending foot could reach the ground.
 Their heads above connected in a row,
 They beat the air with quivering feet below :
 Thus on some tree hung struggling in the snare, 505
 The doves or thrushes flap their wings in air.
 Soon fled the soul impure, and left behind
 The empty corse to waver with the wind.

Then forth they led Melanthius, and began
 Their bloody work ; they lopp'd away the man, 510

Morsel for dogs ! then trimm'd with brazen shears
The wretch, and shorten'd of his nose and ears ;
His hands and feet last felt the cruel steel :
He roar'd, and torments gave his soul to hell.
They wash, and to Ulysses take their way, 515
So ends the bloody business of the day.

To Euryclea then address'd the king :
“ Bring hither fire, and hither sulphur bring,
To purge the palace : then the queen attend,
And let her with her matron train descend ; 520
The matron train, with all the virgin band ;
Assemble here, to learn their lord's command.”

Then Euryclea : “ Joyful I obey,
But cast those mean dishonest rags away :
Permit me first the royal robes to bring : 525
Ill suits this garb the shoulders of a king.”

“ Bring sulphur straight, and fire,” the monarch cries.
She hears, and at the word obedient flies.

With fire and sulphur, cure of noxious fumes,
He purged the walls, and blood-polluted rooms. 530
Again the matron springs with eager pace,
And spreads her lord's return from place to place.
They hear, rush forth, and instant round him stand,
A gazing throng, a torch in every hand.

They saw, they knew him, and with fond embrace
Each humbly kiss'd his knee, or hand, or face ; 536
He knows them all, in all such truth appears,
Ev'n he indulges the sweet joy of tears.

BOOK XXIII.

ARGUMENT.

EURYCLEA awakens Penelope with the news of Ulysses' return and the death of the suitors—Penelope scarcely credits her; but supposes some god has punished them, and descends from her apartment in doubt—At the first interview of Ulysses and Penelope, she is quite unsatisfied—Minerva restores him to the beauty of his youth; but the queen continues incredulous, till by some circumstances she is convinced, and falls into all the transports of passion and tenderness—They recount to each other all that has passed during their long separation—The next morning Ulysses, arming himself and his friends, goes from the city to visit his father.

THEN to the queen, as in repose she lay,
The nurse with eager rapture speeds her way;
The transports of her faithful heart supply
A sudden youth, and give her wings to fly.
“And sleeps my child?” the reverend matron cries:
“Ulysses lives! arise, my child, arise!” 6
At length appears the long-expected hour!
Ulysses comes! the suitors are no more!
No more they view the golden light of day!
Arise, and bless thee with the glad survey!” 10
Touch'd at her words, the mournful queen rejoin'd,
“Ah! whither wanders thy distemper'd mind?
The righteous powers, who tread the starry skies,
The weak enlighten and confound the wise,
And human thought, with unresisted sway; 15
Depress or raise, enlarge or take away:
Truth, by their high decree, thy voice forsakes,
And folly with the tongue of wisdom speaks.
Unkind, the fond illusion to impose!
Was it to flatter or deride my woes? 20

Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy
Since my dear lord left Ithaca for Troy.
Why must I wake to grieve, and curse thy shore,
Oh Troy? may never tongue pronounce thee more!
Begone! another might have felt our rage, 25
But age is sacred, and we spare thy age."

To whom with warmth: "My soul a lie disdains:
Ulysses lives, thy own Ulysses reigns:
That stranger, patient of the suitors' wrongs,
And the rude license of ungovern'd tongues, 30
He, he is thine. Thy son his latent guest
Long knew, but lock'd the secret in his breast;
With well-concerted art to end his woes,
And burst at once in vengeance on the foes." 34

While yet she spoke, the queen in transport sprung
Swift from the couch, and round the matron hung;
Fast from her eye descends the rolling tear.

"Say, once more say, is my Ulysses here?
How could that numerous and outrageous band
By one be slain, though by a hero's hand?" 40

"I saw it not," she cries, "but heard alone,
When death was busy, a loud dying groan;
The damsel train turn'd pale at every wound,
Immured we sat, and catch'd each passing sound;
When death had seized his prey, thy son attends, 45
And at his nod the damsel train descends:

There terrible in arms Ulysses stood,
And the dead suitors almost swam in blood:
Thy heart had leap'd the hero to survey,
Stern as the surly lion o'er his prey, 50

Glorious in gore, now with sulphureous fires
The dome he purges, now the flame aspires:
Heap'd lie the dead without the palace walls:
Haste, daughter, haste, thy own Ulysses calls!
Thy every wish the bounteous gods bestow; 55
Enjoy the present good, and former wo.

Ulysses lives, his vanquish'd foes to see;
He lives to thy Telemachus and thee!"

"Ah, no!" with sighs Penelopé rejoin'd,

"Excess of joy disturbs thy wandering mind ; 60
How bless'd this happy hour, should he appear,
Dear to us all, to me supremely dear !

Ah, no ! some god the suitors' deaths decreed,
Some god descends, and by his hand they bleed ;
Blind ! to condemn the stranger's righteous cause, 65
And violate all hospitable laws !

The good they hated, and the powers defied ;
But Heaven is just, and by a god they died.
For never must Ulysses view this shore ;
Never ! the loved Ulysses is no more !" 70

"What words," the matron cries, "have reach'd
my ears ?

Doubt we his presence, when he now appears ?
Then hear conviction : ere the fatal day
That forced Ulysses o'er the watery way,
A boar, fierce rushing in the sylvan war, 75
Plough'd half his thigh ; I saw, I saw the scar,
And wild with transport had reveal'd the wound ;
But ere I spoke, he rose, and check'd the sound.
Then, daughter, haste away ! and if a lie
Flow from this tongue, then let thy servant die !" 80

To whom with dubious joy the queen replies :
"Wise is thy soul, but errors seize the wise ;
The works of gods what mortal can survey !
Who knows their motives, who shall trace their
way ?

But learn we instant how the suitors trod 85
The paths of death, by man, or by a god."

Thus speaks the queen, and no reply attends,
But with alternate joy and fear descends ;
At every step debates her lord to prove ;
Or, rushing to his arms, confess her love ! 90

Then gliding through the marble valves, in state
Opposed, before the shining sire she sat.
The monarch, by a column high enthroned,
His eye withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground ;
Curious to hear his queen the silence break ; 95
Amazed she sat, and impotent to speak ;

O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,
Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts
again.

At length Telemachus : "Oh, who can find
A woman like Penelope unkind ? 100
Why thus in silence ? why with winning charms
Thus slow to fly with rapture to his arms ?
Stubborn the breast that with no transport glows,
When twice ten years are pass'd of mighty woes ;
To softness lost, to spousal love unknown, 105
The gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone !"

"Oh my Telemachus !" the queen rejoin'd,
"Distracting fears confound my labouring mind ;
Powerless to speak, I scarce uplift my eyes,
Nor dare to question ; doubts on doubts arise. 110
Oh deign he, if Ulysses, to remove
These boding thoughts, and what he is, to prove !"

Pleased with her virtuous fears, the king replies,
"Indulge, my son, the cautions of the wise ; 114
Time shall the truth to sure remembrance bring :
This garb of poverty belies the king ;
No more. This day our deepest care requires,
Cautious to act what thought mature inspires.
If one man's blood, though mean, distain our hands,
The homicide retreats to foreign lands ; 120
By us, in heaps the illustrious peerage falls,
The important deed our whole attention calls."

"Be that thy care," Telemachus replies ;
"The world conspires to speak Ulysses wise ;
For wisdom all is thine ! lo, I obey, 125
And dauntless follow where you lead the way ;
Nor shalt thou in the day of danger find
Thy coward son degenerate lag behind."

"Then instant to the bath," the monarch cries,
"Bid the gay youth and sprightly virgins rise, 130
Thence all descend in pomp and proud array,
And bid the dome resound the mirthful lay ;
While the sweet lyrist airs of rapture sings,
And forms the dance responsive to the strings.

That hence the eluded passengers may say, 135
Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!
'The suitors' death, unknown, till we remove
Far from the court, and act inspired by Jove."

Thus spoke the king; the observant train obey,
At once they bathe, and dress in proud array: 140
The lyrist strikes the string; gay youths advance,
And fair-zoned damsels form the sprightly dance.
The voice, attuned to instrumental sounds,
Ascends the roof, the vaulted roof rebounds;
Not unobserved: the Greeks eluded say, 145
"Lo! the queen weds, we hear the spousal lay!
Inconstant! to admit the bridal hour."
'Thus they; but nobly chaste she weds no more.

Meanwhile the wearied king the bath ascends!
With faithful cares Eurynome attends, 150
O'er every limb a shower of fragrance sheds;
Then, dress'd in pomp, magnificent he treads.
The warrior goddess gives his frame to shine
With majesty enlarged, and grace divine.
Back from his brows in wavy ringlets fly 155
His thick large locks of hyacinthine die.
As by some artist to whom Vulcan gives
His heavenly skill, a breathing image lives:
By Pallas taught, he frames the wondrous mould,
And the pale silver glows with fusile gold: 160
So Pallas his heroic form improves
With bloom divine, and like a god he moves!
More high he treads, and issuing forth in state,
Radiant before his gazing consort sat.
"And, oh my queen!" he cries, "what power above
Has steel'd that heart, averse to spousal love! 166
Canst thou, Penelope, when Heaven restores
Thy lost Ulysses to his native shores,
Canst thou, oh cruel! unconcern'd survey
Thy lost Ulysses, on this signal day? 170
Haste, Euryclea, and despatchful spread
For me, and me alone, the imperial bed;

My weary nature craves the balm of rest ;
But Heaven with adamant has arm'd her breast."

" Ah no !" she cries, " a tender heart I bear, 175
A foe to pride ; no adamant is there ;
And now, ev'n now it melts ! for sure I see
Once more Ulysses my beloved in thee !
Fix'd in my soul, as when he sail'd to Troy,
His image dwells : then haste the bed of joy ! 180
Haste, from the bridal bower the bed translate,
Framed by his hand, and be it dress'd in state !"

Thus speaks the queen, still dubious with disguise .
Touch'd at her words, the king with warmth replies :
" Alas for this ! what mortal strength can move 185
The enormous burden, who but Heaven above !
It mocks the weak attempts of human hands ;
But the whole earth must move if Heaven commands.
Then hear sure evidence, while we display
Words seal'd with sacred truth, and truth obey : 190
This hand the wonder framed ; an olive spread
Full in the court its ever-verdant head.
Vast as some mighty column's bulk, on high
'The huge trunk rose, and heaved into the sky ;
Around the tree I raised a nuptial bower, 195
And roof'd defensive of the storm and shower ;
'The spacious valve, with art inwrought, conjoins ;
And the fair dome with polish'd marble shines.
I lopp'd the branchy head ; aloft in twain
Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain ; 200
Then posts, capacious of the frame, I raise,
And bore it, regular, from space to space ;
Athwart the frame, at equal distance lie
Thongs of tough hides that boast a purple die :
Then polishing the whole, the finish'd mould 205
With silver shone, with elephant and gold.
But if o'erturn'd by rude, ungovern'd hands,
Or still inviolate the olive stands,
'Tis thine, oh queen, to say, and now impart,
If fears remain, or doubts distract thy heart ?" 210

While yet he speaks, her powers of life decay,
She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away.
At length recovering, to his arms she flew,
And strain'd him close, as to his breast she grew :
The tears pour'd down amain ; and, " Oh," she cries,
" Let not against thy spouse thine anger rise ! 216
Oh versed in every turn of human art,
Forgive the weakness of a woman's heart !
The righteous powers, that mortal lots dispose,
Decree us to sustain a length of woes, 220
And from the flower of life the bliss deny
To bloom together, fade away, and die.
Oh let me, let me not thine anger move,
That I forbore, thus, thus to speak my love ;
Thus in fond kisses, while the transport warms, 225
Pour out my soul, and die within thy arms !
I dreaded fraud ! Men, faithless men, betray
Our easy faith, and make the sex their prey :
Against the fondness of my heart I strove :
'Twas caution, oh, my lord ! not want of love. 230
Like me had Helen fear'd, with wanton charms
Ere the fair mischief set two worlds in arms ;
Ere Greece rose dreadful in the avenging day :
Thus had she fear'd, she had not gone astray.
But Heaven, averse to Greece, in wrath decreed 235
That she should wander, and that Greece should
 bleed :
Blind to the ills that from injustice flow,
She colour'd all our wretched lives with wo.
But why these sorrows when my lord arrives ?
I yield, I yield, my own Ulysses lives ! 240
The secrets of the bridal bed are known
To thee, to me, to Actoris alone :
(My father's present in the spousal hour,
The sole attendant on our genial bower.)
Since what no eye hath seen thy tongue reveal'd,
Hard and distrustful as I am, I yield." 246
Touch'd to the soul, the king with rapture hears,
Hangs round her neck, and speaks his joy in tears.

As to the shipwreck'd mariner, the shores
 Delightful rise, when angry Neptune roars ; 250
 Then, when the surge in thunder mounts the sky,
 And gulf'd in crowds at once the sailors die ;
 If one more happy, while the tempest raves,
 Outlives the tumult of conflicting waves,
 All pale, with ooze deform'd, he views the strand, 255
 And plunging forth with transport grasps the land :
 The ravish'd queen with equal rapture glows,
 Clasps her loved lord, and to his bosom grows.
 Nor had they ended till the morning ray,
 But Pallas backward held the rising day, 260
 The wheels of night retarding, to detain
 The gay Aurora in the wavy main ;
 Whose flaming steeds emerging through the night,
 Beam o'er the eastern hills with streaming light.

At length Ulysses with a sigh replies : 265
 " Yet fate, yet cruel fate repose denies ;
 A labour long and hard, remains behind ;
 By Heaven above, by hell beneath enjoind :
 For to Tiresias through the eternal gates
 Of hell I trode, to learn my future fates. 270

But end we here ; the night demands repose,
 Be deck'd the couch ! and peace a while, my woes !"

To whom the queen : " Thy word we shall obey,
 And deck the couch ; far hence be woes away ;
 Since the just gods, who tread the starry plains, 275
 Restore thee safe, since my Ulysses reigns.

But what those perils Heaven decrees, impart :
 Knowledge may grieve, but fear distracts the heart."

To this the king : " Ah, why must I disclose
 A dreadful story of approaching woes ? 280
 Why in this hour of transport wound thy ears,
 When thou must learn what I must speak with
 tears ?

Heaven, by the Theban ghost, thy spouse decrees,
 Torn from thy arms, to sail a length of seas ;
 From realm to realm, a nation to explore 285
 Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,

Nor saw gay vessel stem the surgy plain,
 A painted wonder, flying on the main :
 An oar my hand must bear ; a shepherd eyes
 'The unknown instrument with strange surprise, 290
 And calls a corn van: this upon the plain
 I fix, and hail the monarch of the main ;
 'Then bathe his altars with the mingled gore
 Of victims vow'd, a ram, a bull, a boar ;
 Thence swift resailing to my native shores, 295
 Due victims slay to all the ethereal powers.
 Then Heaven decrees, in peace to end my days,
 And steal myself from life by slow decays ;
 Unknown to pain, in age resign my breath,
 When late stern Neptune points the shaft of death ;
 To the dark grave retiring as to rest ; 301
 My people blessing, by my people bless'd.

" Such future scenes the all-righteous powers display

By their dread seer, and such my future day."

To whom thus firm of soul : " If ripe for death, 305
 And full of days, thou gently yield thy breath ;
 While Heaven a kind release from ill's foreshows ;
 Triumph, thou happy victor of thy woes !"

But Euryclea, with despatchful care,
 And sage Eurynome, the couch prepare : 310
 Instant they bid the blazing torch display
 Around the dome an artificial day ;
 Then to repose her steps the matron bends,
 And to the queen Eurynome descends ;
 A torch she bears, to light with guiding fires 315
 The royal pair ; she guides them, and retires.
 Then instant his fair spouse Ulysses led
 To the chaste love-rites of the nuptial bed.

And now the blooming youths and sprightly fair
 Cease the gay dance, and to their rest repair ; 320
 But in discourse the king and consort lay,
 While the soft hours stole unperceived away ;

Intent he hears Penelope disclose
A mournful story of domestic woes,
His servants' insults, his invaded bed, 325
How his whole flocks and herds exhausted bled,
His generous wines dishonour'd shed in vain,
And the wild riots of the suitor train.
The king alternate a dire tale relates,
Of wars, of triumphs, and disastrous fates ; 330
All he unfolds ; his listening spouse turns pale
With pleasing horror at the dreadful tale ;
Sleepless devours each word ; and hears how slain
Cicons on Cicons swell the ensanguined plain ;
How to the land of Lote, unblest'd he sails ; 335
And images the rills and flowery vales !
How dash'd like dogs, his friends the Cyclop tore,
(Not unrevenged,) and quaff'd the spouting gore ;
How the loud storms in prison bound, he sails
From friendly Æolus with prosperous gales ; 340
Yet fate withstands ! a sudden tempest roars,
And whirls him groaning from his native shores :
How on the barbarous Læstrigian coast,
By savage hands his fleet and friends he lost ;
How scarce himself survived ; he paints the bower,
The spells of Circe, and her magic power ; 346
His dreadful journey to the realms beneath,
To seek 'Tiresias in the vales of death ;
How in the doleful mansions he survey'd
His royal mother, pale Anticlea's shade ; 350
And friends in battle slain, heroic ghosts !
Then how, unharm'd, he pass'd the Siren coasts,
The justling rocks where fierce Charybdis raves,
And howling Scylla whirls her thunderous waves,
The cave of death ! How his companions slay 355
The sacred oxen to the god of day.
Till Jove in wrath the rattling tempest guides,
And whelms the offenders in the roaring tides :
How struggling through the surge he reach'd the
shores
Of fair Ogygia, and Calypso's bowers ; 360

Where the gay blooming nymph constrain'd his stay,
With sweet, reluctant, amorous delay;
And promised, vainly promised, to bestow
Immortal life, exempt from age and wo :
How saved from storms Phæacia's coast he trod,
By great Alcinous honour'd as a god, 366
Who gave him last his country to behold,
With change of raiment, brass, and heaps of gold.

He ended, sinking into sleep, and shares
A sweet forgetfulness of all his cares. 370

Soon as soft slumber eased the toils of day,
Minerva rushes through the aerial way,
And bids Aurora with her golden wheels
Flame from the ocean o'er the western hills ;
Up rose Ulysses from the genial bed, 375
And thus with thought mature the monarch said :

“ My queen, my consort ! through a length of years
We drank the cup of sorrow mix'd with tears ;
Thou, for thy lord : while me the immortal powers
Detain'd reluctant from my native shores. 380
Now, bless'd again by Heaven, the queen display,
And rule our palace with an equal sway.
Be it my care, by loans, or martial toils,
To throng my empty folds with gifts or spoils.
But now I haste to bless Laertes' eyes 385
With sight of his Ulysses ere he dies ;
The good old man, to wasting woes a prey,
Weeps a sad life in solitude away.

But hear, though wise ! This morning shall unfold
The deathful scene, on heroes heroes roll'd. 390
Thou with thy maids within the palace stay,
From all the scene of tumult far away !”

He spoke, and sheath'd in arms incessant flies
To wake his son, and bid his friends arise.
“ To arms !” aloud he cries : his friends obey, 395
With glittering arms their manly limbs array,
And pass the city gate ; Ulysses leads the way.
Now flames the rosy dawn, but Pallas shrouds
The latent warriors in a veil of clouds.

BOOK XXIV.

ARGUMENT.

THE souls of the suitors are conducted by Mercury to the infernal shades—Ulysses in the country goes to the retirement of his father Laertes; he finds him in his garden all alone: the manner of his discovery to him is beautifully described—They return together to his lodge, and the king is acknowledged by Dolius and the servants—The Ithacensians, led by Eupithes, the father of Antinous, rise against Ulysses, who gives them battle, in which Eupithes is killed by Laertes; and the goddess Pallas makes a lasting peace between Ulysses and his subjects, which concludes the Odyssey.

CYLLENIUS now to Pluto's dreary reign
Conveys the dead, a lamentable train!
The golden wand, that causes sleep to fly,
Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye,
That drives the ghosts to realms of night or day, 5
Points out the long uncomfortable way.
Trembling the spectres glide, and plaintive vent
Thin, hollow screams, along the deep descent.
As in the cavern of some rifted den,
Where flock nocturnal bats, and birds obscene: 10
Cluster'd they hang, till at some sudden shock
They move, and murmurs run through all the rock!
So cowering fled the sable heaps of ghosts,
And such a scream fill'd all the dismal coasts.
And now they reach'd the earth's remotest ends, 15
And now the gates where evening Sol descends,
And Leucas' rock, and ocean's utmost streams,
And now pervade the dusky land of dreams,
And rest at last, where souls unbodied dwell
In ever-flowering meads of asphodel. 20

The empty forms of men inhabit there,
 Impassive semblance, images of air !
 Naught else are all that shined on earth before ;
 Ajax and great Achilles are no more !
 Yet still a master ghost, the rest he awed, 25
 The rest adored him, towering as he trod ;
 Still at his side is Nestor's son survey'd,
 And loved Patroclus still attends his shade.

New as they were to that infernal shore,
 The suitors stopp'd, and gazed the hero o'er. 30
 When, moving slow, the regal form they view'd
 Of great Atrides : him in pomp pursued
 And solemn sadness through the gloom of hell,
 The train of those who by Ægysthus fell.

" Oh mighty chief !" Pelides thus began, 35
 " Honour'd by Jove above the lot of man !
 King of a hundred kings ! to whom resign'd
 The strongest, bravest, greatest of mankind,
 Comest thou the first, to view this dreary state ?
 And was the noblest, the first mark of fate, 40
 Condemn'd to pay the great arrear so soon,
 The lot, which all lament, and none can shun !
 Oh ! better hadst thou sunk in Trojan ground,
 With all thy full-blown honours cover'd round ;
 Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes might
 raise 45

Historic marbles to record thy praise :
 Thy praise eternal on the faithful stone
 Had with transmissive glories graced thy son.
 But heavier fates were destined to attend :
 What man is happy, till he knows his end !" 50

" Oh son of Peleus ! greater than mankind !" 55
 Thus Agamemnon's kingly shade rejoin'd ;
 " Thrice happy thou, to press the martial plain
 Mid heaps of heroes in thy quarrel slain :
 In clouds of smoke raised by the noble fray,
 Great and terrific ev'n in death you lay,
 And deluges of blood flow'd round you every way.

Nor ceased the strife till Jove himself opposed,
 And all in tempests the dire evening closed.
 Then to the fleet we bore thy honour'd load, 60
 And decent on the funeral bed bestow'd :
 Then unguents sweet and tepid streams we shed ;
 Tears flow'd from every eye, and o'er the dead
 Each clipp'd the curling honours of his head.
 Struck at the news, thy azure mother came : 65
 The sea-green sisters waited on the dame :
 A voice of loud lament through all the main
 Was heard ; and terror seized the Grecian train :
 Back to their ships the frighted host had fled ;
 But Nestor spoke, they listen'd and obey'd. 70
 (From old experience Nestor's counsel springs,
 And long vicissitudes of human things.)
 ' Forbear your flight: fair Thetis from the main
 To mourn Achilles leads her azure train.'
 Around thee stand the daughters of the deep, 75
 Robe thee in heavenly vests, and round thee weep ;
 Round thee, the muses, with alternate strain,
 In ever-consecrating verse, complain.
 Each warlike Greek the moving music hears,
 And iron-hearted heroes melt in tears. 80
 Till seventeen nights and seventeen days return'd,
 All that was mortal or immortal mourn'd.
 To flames we gave thee, the succeeding day,
 And fatted sheep, and sable oxen slay ;
 With oils and honey blaze the augmented fires, 85
 And, like a god adorn'd, thy earthly part expires.
 Unnumber'd warriors round the burning pile
 Urge the fleet courser's or the racer's toil ;
 Thick clouds of dust o'er all the circle rise,
 And the mix'd clamour thunders in the skies. 90
 Soon as absorb'd in all embracing flame
 Sunk what was mortal of thy mighty name,
 We then collect thy snowy bones, and place
 With wines and unguents in a golden vase :
 (The vase to Thetis Bacchus gave of old, 95
 And Vulcan's art enrich'd the sculptured gold.)

There we thy relics, great Achilles ! blend
With dear Patroclus, thy departed friend :
In the same urn a separate space contains
Thy next beloved, Antilochus' remains. 100
Now all the sons of warlike Greece surround
Thy destined tomb, and cast a mighty mound :
High on the shore the growing hill we raise,
That wide the extended Hellespont surveys ;
Where all, from age to age, who pass the coast, 105
May point Achilles' tomb, and hail the mighty ghost.
Thetis herself to all our peers proclaims
Heroic prizes and exequial games ;
The gods assented ; and around thee lay
Rich spoils and gifts that blazed against the day. 110
Oft have I seen with solemn funeral games
Heroes and kings committed to the flames ;
But strength of youth, or valour of the brave,
With nobler contest ne'er renown'd a grave.
Such were the games by azure Thetis given, 115
And such thy honours, oh beloved of Heaven !
Dear to mankind thy fame survives, nor fades
Its bloom eternal in the Stygian shades.
But what to me avail my honours gone,
Successful toils, and battles bravely won ? 120
Doom'd by stern Jove at home to end my life,
By cursed Ægysthus, and a faithless wife !"
Thus they : while Hermes o'er the dreary plain
Led the sad numbers by Ulysses slain.
On each majestic form they cast a view, 125
And timorous pass'd, and awfully withdrew.
But Agamemnon, through the gloomy shade,
His ancient host Amphimedon survey'd ;
" Son of Melanthius !" he began, " oh say !
What cause compell'd so many, and so gay, 130
To tread the downward, melancholy way ?
Say, could one city yield a troop so fair ?
Were all these partners of one native air ?
Or did the rage of stormy Neptune sweep
Your lives at once, and overwhelm beneath the deep ? 135

Did nightly thieves, or pirates' cruel bands,
Drench with your blood your pillaged country's
sands?

Or well-defending some beleaguer'd wall,
Say, for the public did ye greatly fall?
Inform thy guest: for such I was of yore 140
When our triumphant navies touch'd your shore;
Forced a long month the wintry seas to bear,
'To move the great Ulysses to the war.'

"Oh king of men! I faithful shall relate,"
Replied Amphimedon, "our hapless fate. 145
Ulysses absent, our ambitious aim
With rival loves pursued his royal dame;
Her coy reserve, and prudence mix'd with pride,
Our common suit nor granted, nor denied;
But close with inward hate our deaths design'd; 150
Versed in all arts of wily woman kind.
Her hand, laborious, in delusion spread
A spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread.
'Ye peers,' she cried, 'who press to gain my heart,
Where dead Ulysses claims no more a part, 155
Yet a short space your rival suit suspend,
Till this funereal web my labours end:
Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
A task of grief, his ornaments of death:
Lest, when the fates his royal ashes claim, 160
The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame;
Should he, long honour'd with supreme command,
Want the last duties of a daughter's hand.'

"The fiction pleased, our generous train complies,
Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise. 165
The work she plied, but studious of delay,
Each following night reversed the toils of day.
Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail;
The fourth, her maid reveal'd the amazing tale,
And show'd, as unperceived we took our stand, 170
The backward labours of her faithless hand.
Forced, she completes it; and before us lay

The mingled web, whose gold and silver ray
Display'd the radiance of the night and day.
"Just as she finish'd her illustrious toil, 175
Ill fortune led Ulysses to our isle.
Far in a lonely nook, beside the sea,
At an old swineherd's rural lodge he lay :
'Thither his son from sandy Pyle repairs,
And speedy lands, and secretly confers. 180
They plan our future ruin, and resort
Confederate to the city and the court.
First came the son ; the father next succeeds,
Clad like a beggar, whom Eumæus leads ;
Propp'd on a staff, deform'd with age and care, 185
And hung with rags that flutter'd in the air.
Who could Ulysses in that form behold ?
Scorn'd by the young, forgotten by the old,
Ill used by all ! to every wrong resign'd,
Patient he suffer'd with a constant mind. 190
But when, arising in his wrath to obey
The will of Jove, he gave the vengeance way ;
The scatter'd arms that hung around the dome
Careful he treasured in a private room :
Then to her suitors bade his queen propose 195
The archer's strife, the source of future woes,
And omen of our death ! In vain we drew
The twanging string, and tried the stubborn yew :
'To none it yields but great Ulysses' hands ;
In vain we threat ; Telemachus commands : 200
The bow he snatch'd, and in an instant bent ;
Through every ring the victor arrow went.
Fierce on the threshold then in arms he stood ;
Pour'd forth the darts that thirsted for our blood,
And frown'd before us, dreadful as a god ! 205
First bleeds Antinous ; thick the shafts resound ;
And heaps on heaps the wretches strew the ground ;
'This way, and that, we turn, we fly, we fall ;
Some god assisted, and unmann'd us all :
Ignoble cries precede the dying groans ; 210
And batter'd brains and blood besmear the stones.

“ Thus, great Atrides ! thus Ulysses drove
The shades thou seest, from yon fair realms above ;
Our mangled bodies now deform'd with gore,
Cold and neglected, spread the marble floor. 215
No friend to bathe our wounds ! or tears to shed
O'er the pale corse ! the honours of the dead.”

“ Oh bless'd Ulysses !” thus the king express'd
His sudden rapture, “ in thy consort bless'd !
Not more thy wisdom than her virtue shined ; 220
Not more thy patience than her constant mind.
Icarius' daughter, glory of the past,
And model to the future age, shall last :
The gods, to honour her fair fame, shall raise
(Their great reward) a poet in her praise. 225
Not such, oh Tyndarus ! thy daughter's deed,
By whose dire hand her king and husband bled ;
Her shall the muse to infamy prolong,
Example dread, and theme of tragic song !
The general sex shall suffer in her shame, 230
And ev'n the best that bears a woman's name.”

Thus in the regions of eternal shade
Conferr'd the mournful phantoms of the dead ;
While from the town, Ulysses and his band
Pass'd to Laertes' cultivated land. 235
The ground himself had purchased with his pain,
And labour made the rugged soil a plain.
There stood his mansion of the rural sort,
With useful buildings round the lowly court ;
Where the few servants that divide his care 240
Took their laborious rest, and homely fare ;
And one Sicilian matron, old and sage,
With constant duty tends his drooping age.

Here now arriving, to his rustic band
And martial son, Ulysses gave command. 245
“ Enter the house, and of the bristly swine
Select the largest to the powers divine.
Alone, and unattended, let me try
If yet I share the old man's memory :
If those dim eyes can yet Ulysses know, 250

(Their light and dearest object long ago,)
Now changed with time, with absence, and with wo."
Then to his train he gives his spear and shield;
The house they enter; and he seeks the field,
Through rows of shade, with various fruitage
crown'd, 255

And labour'd scenes of richest verdure round.
Nor aged Dolius, nor his sons were there,
Nor servants, absent on another care;
To search the woods for sets of flowery thorn,
Their orchard bounds to strengthen and adorn. 260

But all alone the hoary king he found;
His habit coarse, but warmly wrapp'd around;
His head that bow'd with many a pensive care,
Fenced with a double cap of goatskin hair:
His buskins old, in former service torn, 265
But well repair'd; and gloves against the thorn.
In this array the kingly gardener stood,
And clear'd a plant, encumber'd with its wood.

Beneath a neighbouring tree, the chief divine 270
Gazed o'er his sire, retracing every line,
The ruins of himself! now worn away
With age, yet still majestic in decay!
Sudden his eyes released their watery store;
The much-enduring man could bear no more.
Doubtful he stood, if instant to embrace 275
His aged limbs, to kiss his reverend face,
With eager transport to disclose the whole,
And pour at once the torrent of his soul.

Not so: his judgment takes the winding way
Of question distant, and of soft essay; 280
More gentle methods on weak age employs;
And moves the sorrows, to enhance the joys.
Then, to his sire with beating heart he moves,
And with a tender pleasantry reproves;
Who digging round the plant still hangs his head, 285
Nor aught remits the work, while thus he said:

"Great is thy skill, oh father! great thy toil,
Thy careful hand is stamp'd on all the soil,

Thy squadron'd vineyards well thy art declare,
 The olive green, blue fig, and pendant pear ; 290
 And not one empty spot escapes thy care.
 On every plant and tree thy cares are shown,
 Nothing neglected, but thyself alone.
 Forgive me, father, if this fault I blame ;
 Age so advanced may some indulgence claim. 295
 Not for thy sloth, I deem thy lord unkind :
 Nor speaks thy form a mean or servile mind ;
 I read a monarch in that princely air,
 The same thy aspect, if the same thy care ;
 Soft sleep, fair garments, and the joys of wine, 300
 These are the rights of age, and should be thine.
 Who then thy master, say ? and whose the land
 So dress'd and managed by the skilful hand ?
 But chief, oh tell me ! (what I question most,)
 Is this the far-famed Ithacensian coast ? 305
 For so reported the first man I view'd,
 (Some surly islander, of manners rude,)
 No further conference vouchsafed to say ;
 Heedless he whistled, and pursued his way.
 But thou, whom years have taught to understand,
 Humanely hear, and answer my demand : 311
 A friend I seek, a wise one and a brave ;
 Say, lives he yet, or moulders in the grave ?
 'Time was (my fortunes then were at the best)
 When at my house I lodged this foreign guest ; 315
 He said, from Ithaca's fair isle he came,
 And old Laertes was his father's name.
 To him, whatever to a guest is owed
 I paid, and hospitable gifts bestow'd :
 To him seven talents of pure ore I told, 320
 Twelve cloaks, twelve vests, twelve tunics stiff with
 gold ;
 A bowl, that rich with polish'd silver flames,
 And, skill'd in female works, four lovely dames."
 At this the father, with a father's fears :
 (His venerable eyes bedimm'd with tears:) 325

"This is the land ; but ah ! thy gifts are lost,
 For godless men, and rude, possess the coast :
 Sunk is the glory of this once-famed shore !
 Thy ancient friend, oh stranger, is no more !
 Full recompense thy bounty else had borne ; 330
 For every good man yields a just return :
 So civil rights demand ; and who begins
 The track of friendship, not pursuing, sins.
 But tell me, stranger, be the truth confess'd,
 What years have circled since thou saw'st that
 guest ? 335

That hapless guest, alas ! for ever gone !
 Wretch that he was ! and that I am ! my son !
 If ever man to misery was born,
 'Twas his to suffer and 'tis mine to mourn !
 Far from his friends, and from his native reign, 340
 He lies a prey to monsters of the main ;
 Or savage beasts his mangled relics tear,
 Or screaming vultures scatter through the air :
 Nor could his mother funeral unguents shed ;
 Nor wail'd his father o'er the untimely dead : 345
 Nor his sad consort, on the mournful bier,
 Seal'd his cold eyes, or dropp'd a tender tear !

"But, tell me who thou art ? and what thy race ?
 Thy town, thy parents, and thy native place ?
 Or, if a merchant in pursuit of gain, 350
 What port received thy vessel from the main ?
 Or comest thou single, or attend thy train ?"

Then thus the son : "From Alybas I came,
 My palace there ; Eperitus my name.
 Not vulgar born ; from Aphidas, the king 355
 Of Polyphemon's royal line, I spring.
 Some adverse demon from Sicania bore
 Our wandering course, and drove us on your shore ;
 Far from the town, an unfrequented bay
 Relieved our wearied vessel from the sea. 360
 Five years have circled since these eyes pursued
 Ulysses parting through the sable flood ;

Prosperous he sail'd with dexter auguries,
And all the wing'd good omen's of the skies.
Well hoped we then to meet on this fair shore, 365
Whom Heaven, alas ! decreed to meet no more."

Quick through the father's heart these accents ran;
Grief seized at once, and wrapp'd up all the man :
Deep from his soul he sigh'd, and sorrowing spread
A cloud of ashes on his hoary head. 370

Trembling with agonies of strong delight
Stood the great son, heart-wounded with the sight :
He ran, he seized him with a quick embrace,
With thousand kisses wander'd o'er his face.

" I, I am he ; oh father, rise ! behold 375
Thy son, with twenty winters now grown old ;
Thy son, so long desired, so long detain'd,
Restored, and breathing in his native land :
These floods of sorrow, oh my sire, restrain !
The vengeance is complete ; the suitor train, 380
Stretch'd in our palace, by these hands lie slain."

Amazed, Laertes : " Give some certain sign,
If such thou art, to manifest thee mine."

" Lo here the wound," he cries, " received of yore,
The scar indented by the tusky boar, 385
When, by thyself, and by Anticlea sent,
To old Autolycus's realms I went.

Yet by another sign thy offspring know ;
The several trees you gave me long ago,
While, yet a child, these fields I loved to trace, 390
And trod thy footsteps with unequal pace ;

To every plant in order as we came,
Well-pleased, you told its nature and its name,
Whate'er my childish fancy ask'd, bestow'd ;
Twelve pear-trees, bowing with their pendant load,
And ten, that red with blushing apples glow'd ; 396
Full fifty purple figs ; and many a row
Of various vines that then began to blow,
A future vintage ! when the hours produce
Their latent buds, and Sol exalts the juice." 400

Smit with the signs which all his doubts explain,
 His heart within him melts; his knees sustain
 Their feeble weight no more: his arms alone
 Support him, round the loved Ulysses thrown;
 He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys oppress'd: 405
 Ulysses clasps him to his eager breast.
 Soon as returning life regains its seat,
 And his breath lengthens, and his pulses beat;
 "Yes, I believe," he cries, "Almighty Jove!
 Heaven rules us yet, and gods there are above. 410
 'Tis so; the suitors for their wrongs have paid;
 But what shall guard us, if the town invade?
 If, while the news through every city flies,
 All Ithaca and Cephallenia rise?"

To this Ulysses: "As the gods shall please 415
 Be all the rest; and set thy soul at ease.
 Haste to the cottage by this orchard's side,
 And take the banquet which our cares provide:
 There wait thy faithful band of rural friends,
 And there the young Telemachus attends." 420

Thus having said, they traced the garden o'er,
 And stooping enter'd at the lowly door.
 The swains and young Telemachus they found,
 The victim portion'd, and the goblet crown'd.
 The hoary king, his old Sicilian maid 425
 Perfumed and wash'd, and gorgeously array'd.
 Pallas attending gives his frame to shine
 With awful port, and majesty divine;
 His gazing son admires the godlike grace,
 And air celestial dawning o'er his face. 430
 "What god," he cried, "my father's form improves?
 How high he treads, and how enlarged he moves!"

"Oh! would to all the deathless powers on high,
 Pallas and Jove, and him who gilds the sky!"
 Replied the king, elated with his praise, 435
 "My strength were still, as once in better days;
 When the bold Cephaleus the leaguer form'd,
 And proud Nericus trembled as I storm'd!"

Such were I now, not absent from your deed
 When the last sun beheld the suitors bleed, 440
 This arm had aided yours, this hand bestrown
 Our shores with death, and push'd the slaughter on;
 Nor had the sire been separate from the son."

They communed thus; while homeward bent their
 way

The swains, fatigued with labours of the day: 445
 Dolius the first, the venerable man;
 And next his sons, a long succeeding train
 For due refection to the bower they came,
 Call'd by the careful old Sicilian dame, 449
 Who nursed the children, and now tends the sire;
 They see their lord, they gaze, and they admire.
 On chairs and beds in order seated round,
 They share the gladsome board; the roofs resound,
 While thus Ulysses to his ancient friend:

"Forbear your wonder, and the feast attend: 455
 The rites have waited long." The chief commands
 Their loves in vain; old Dolius spreads his hands,
 Springs to his master with a warm embrace,
 And fastens kisses on his hands and face;
 Then thus broke out: "Oh long, oh daily mourn'd!
 Beyond our hopes, and to our wish return'd! 461
 Conducted sure by Heaven! for Heaven alone
 Could work this wonder: welcome to thy own!
 And joys and happiness attend thy throne!
 Who knows thy bless'd, thy wish'd return? Oh say,
 To the chaste queen shall we the news convey? 466
 Or hears she, and with blessings loads the day?"

"Dismiss that care, for to the royal bride
 Already is it known," the king replied,
 And straight resumed his seat; while round him
 bows 470

Each faithful youth, and breathes out ardent vows:
 Then all beneath their father take their place,
 Rank'd by their ages, and the banquet grace.

Now flying Fame the swift report had spread
 Through all the city, of the suitors dead. 475

In throngs they rise, and to the palace crowd;
Their sighs were many, and the tumult loud.
Weeping they bear the mangled heaps of slain,
Inhume the natives in their native plain,
The rest in ships are wafted o'er the main. 480
Then sad in council all the seniors sat,
Frequent and full, assembled to debate:
Amid the circle first Eupithes rose,
Big was his eye with tears, his heart with woes:
The bold Antinous was his age's pride, 485
The first who by Ulysses' arrow died.
Down his wan cheek the trickling torrent ran,
As mixing words with sighs he thus began:

“Great deeds, oh friends! this wondrous man has
wrought,
And mighty blessings to his country brought! 490
With ships he parted, and a numerous train,
Those, and their ships, he buried in the main.
Now he returns, and first essays his hand
In the best blood of all his native land.
Haste then, and ere to neighbouring Pyle he flies, 495
Or sacred Elis, to procure supplies;
Arise, (or ye for ever fall,) arise!
Shame to this age, and all that shall succeed!
If unrevenged your sons and brothers bleed.
Prove that we live, by vengeance on his head, 500
Or sink at once forgotten with the dead.”

Here ceased he, but indignant tears let fall
Spoke when he ceased: dumb sorrow touch'd them
all.

When from the palace to the wondering throng
Sage Medon came, and Phemius came along; 505
(Restless and early sleep's soft bands they broke;)
And Medon first the assembled chiefs bespoke:
“Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land,
Who deem this act the work of mortal hand;
As o'er the heaps of death Ulysses strode, 510
These eyes, these eyes beheld a present god,

Who now before him, now beside him stood,
Fought as he fought, and mark'd his way with
blood :

In vain old Mentor's form the god belied :
'Twas Heaven that struck, and Heaven was on his
side." 515

A sudden horror all the assembly shook,
When slowly rising, Halitherses spoke :
(Reverend and wise, whose comprehensive view
At once the present and the future knew :)
" Me too, ye fathers, hear ! from you proceed 520
The ills ye mourn ; your own the guilty deed.
Ye gave your sons, your lawless sons, the rein ;
(Oft warn'd by Mentor and myself in vain ;)
An absent hero's bed they sought to soil,
An absent hero's wealth they made their spoil ; 525
Immoderate riot, and intemperate lust !
The offence was great, the punishment was just.
Weigh then my counsels in an equal scale,
Nor rush to ruin. Justice will prevail."

His moderate words some better minds persuade :
They part, and join him : but the number staid. 531
They storm, they shout, with hasty phrensy fired,
And second all Eupithes' rage inspired.
They case their limbs in brass ; to arms they run ;
The broad effulgence blazes in the sun. 535
Before the city, and in ample plain,
They meet : Eupithes heads the frantic train.
Fierce for his son, he breathes his threats in air ;
Fate hears them not, and Death attends him there.

This pass'd on earth, while in the realms above 540
Minerva thus to cloud-compelling Jove :
" May I presume to search thy secret soul ?
Oh Power supreme, oh Ruler of the whole !
Say, hast thou doom'd to this divided state
Or peaceful amity, or stern debate ! 545
Declare thy purpose, for thy will is fate."

" Is not thy thought my own !" the god replies
Who rolls the thunder o'er the vaulted skies ;

“Hath not long since thy knowing soul decreed,
The chief’s return should make the guilty bleed! 550
’Tis done, and at thy will the fates succeed.
Yet hear the issue; since Ulysses’ hand
Has slain the suitors, Heaven shall bless the land.
None now the kindred of the unjust shall own;
Forgot the slaughter’d brother and the son: 555
Each future day increase of wealth shall bring,
And o’er the past Oblivion stretch her wing.
Long shall Ulysses in his empire rest,
His people blessing, by his people bless’d.
Let all be peace.” He said, and gave the nod 560
That binds the fates; the sanction of the god;
And prompt to execute the eternal will,
Descended Pallas from the Olympian hill.

Now sat Ulysses at the rural feast,
The rage of hunger and of thirst repress’d: 565
To watch the foe a trusty spy he sent:
A son of Dolius on the message went,
Stood in the way, and at a glance beheld
The foe approach, embattled on the field.
With backward step he hastens to the bower, 570
And tells the news. They arm with all their power.
Four friends alone Ulysses’ cause embrace,
And six were all the sons of Dolius’ race:
Old Dolius too his rusted arms put on;
And, still more old, in arms Laertes shone. 575
Trembling with warmth, the hoary heroes stand,
And brazen panoply invests the band.
The opening gates at once their war display:
Fierce they rush forth: Ulysses leads the way.
That moment joins them with celestial aid, 580
In Mentor’s form, the Jove-descended maid:
The suffering hero felt his patient breast
Swell with new joy, and thus his son address’d:
“Behold, Telemachus! (nor fear the sight,)
The brave embattled, the grim front of fight! 585
The valiant with the valiant must contend:
Shame not the line whence glorious you descend.

Wide o'er the world their martial fame was spread;
Regard thyself, the living, and the dead."

"Thy eyes, great father! on this battle cast, 590
Shall learn from me Penelope was chaste."

So spoke Telemachus! the gallant boy
Good old Laertes heard with panting joy;
"And bless'd! thrice bless'd this happy day!" he
cries,

"The day that shows me, ere I close my eyes, 595
A son and grandson of the Arcesian name
Strive for fair virtue, and contest for fame!"

Then thus Minerva in Laertes' ear:

"Son of Arcesius, reverend warrior, hear!
Jove and Jove's daughter first implore in prayer, 600
Then, whirling high, discharge thy lance in air."
She said, infusing courage with the word.

Jove and Jove's daughter then the chief implored,
And, whirling high, dismiss'd the lance in air.
Full at Eupithes drove the deathful spear: 605
The brass-cheek'd helmet opens to the wound:
He falls, earth thunders, and his arms resound.

Before the father and the conquering son
Heaps rush on heaps, they fight, they drop, they
run.

Now by the sword, and now the javelin fall 610
The rebel race, and death had swallow'd all;
But from on high the blue-eyed virgin cried;
Her awful voice detain'd the headlong tide:

"Forbear, ye nations, your mad hands forbear
From mutual slaughter; Peace descends to spare."
Fear shook the nations: at the voice divine 616
They drop their javelins, and their rage resign.
All scatter'd round their glittering weapons lie;
Some fall to earth, and some confusedly fly.

With dreadful shouts Ulysses pour'd along, 620
Swift as an eagle, as an eagle strong.
But Jove's red arm the burning thunder aims;
Before Minerva shot the livid flames;

Blazing they fell, and at her feet expired ;
Then stopp'd the goddess, trembled, and retired. 625

“ Descended from the gods ! Ulysses, cease ;
Offend not Jove : obey, and give the peace.”

So Pallas spoke : the mandate from above
The king obey'd. The virgin-seed of Jove,
In Mentor's form confirm'd the full accord, 630
And willing nations knew their lawful lord.

END OF THE ODYSSEY.

POSTSCRIPT.

I CANNOT dismiss this work without a few observations on the character and style of it. Whoever reads the *Odyssey* with an eye to the *Iliad*, expecting to find it of the same character or of the same sort of spirit, will be grievously deceived, and err against the first principle of criticism, which is, to consider the nature of the piece, and the intent of its author. The *Odyssey* is a moral and political work, instructive to all degrees of men, and filled with images, examples, and precepts of civil and domestic life. Homer is here a person,

“ Qui didicit, patriæ quid debeat, et quid amicis,
Quo sit amore parens, quo frater amandus, et hospes :
Qui quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non,
Plenius et melius Chrysippo et Crantore dicit.”

The *Odyssey* is the reverse of the *Iliad*, in moral, subject, manner, and style ; to which it has no sort of relation, but as the story happens to follow in order of time, and as some of the same persons are actors in it. Yet from this incidental connection many have been misled to regard it as a continuation or second part, and thence to expect a parity of character inconsistent with its nature.

It is no wonder that the common reader should fall into this mistake, when so great a critic as Longinus seems not wholly free from it ; although what he has said has been generally understood to import a severer censure of the *Odyssey* than it really does, if we consider the occasion on which it is introduced, and the circumstances to which it is confined.

“ The *Odyssey*,” says he, “ is an instance how natural it is to a great genius, when it begins to grow old and decline, to delight itself in narrations and fables : for that Homer composed the *Odyssey* after the *Iliad*, many proofs may be given, &c. From hence, in my judgment, it proceeds, that as the *Iliad* was written while his spirit was in its greatest vigour, the whole structure of that work is dramatic and full of action ; whereas, the greater part of the *Odyssey* is employed in narration, which is the taste of old age · so that in this latter piece we may com

pare him to the setting sun, which has still the same greatness, but not the same ardour or force. He speaks not in the same strain; we see no more that sublime of the *Iliad*, which marches on with a constant pace, without ever being stopped or retarded: there appears no more that hurry, and that strong tide of motions and passions, pouring one after another: there is no more the same fury, or the same volubility of diction, so suitable to action, and all along drawing in such innumerable images of nature. But Homer, like the ocean, is always great, even when he ebbs and retires; even when he is lowest, and loses himself most in narrations and incredible fictions: as instances of this, we cannot forget the descriptions of tempests, the adventures of Ulysses with the Cyclops, and many others. But, though all this be age, it is the age of Homer. And it may be said for the credit of these fictions, that they are beautiful dreams, or, if you will, the dreams of Jupiter himself. I spoke of the *Odyssey* only to show that the greatest poets, when their genius wants strength and warmth for the pathetic, for the most part employ themselves in painting the manners. This Homer has done in characterizing the suitors, and describing their way of life; which is properly a branch of comedy, whose peculiar business it is to represent the manners of men."

We must first observe, it is the sublime of which Longinus is writing: that, and not the nature of Homer's poem, is his subject. After having highly extolled the sublimity and fire of the *Iliad*, he justly observes the *Odyssey* to have less of those qualities, and to turn more on the side of moral, and reflections on human life. Nor is it his business here to determine, whether the elevated spirit of the one, or the just moral of the other, be the greater excellence in itself.

Secondly, that fire and fury of which he is speaking cannot well be meant of the general spirit and inspiration which is to run through a whole epic poem, but of that particular warmth and impetuosity necessary in some parts, to image or represent actions or passions, of haste, tumult, and violence. It is on occasion of citing some such particular passages in Homer that Longinus breaks into this reflection; which seems to determine his meaning chiefly to that sense.

On the whole, he affirms the *Odyssey* to have less sublimity and fire than the *Iliad*, but he does not say it wants the sublime, or wants fire. He affirms it to abound in fictions, not that those fictions are ill invented, or ill executed. He affirms it to be nice and particular in painting the manners, but not that those manners are ill painted. If Homer has fully in these points accomplished his own design, and done all that the nature of his poem demanded or allowed, it still remains perfect in its kind, and as much a masterpiece as the *Iliad*.

The amount of the passage is this: that in his own particular

taste, and with respect to the sublime, Longinus preferred the *Iliad*: and because the *Odyssey* was less active and lofty, he judged it the work of the old age of Homer.

If this opinion be true, it will only prove, that Homer's age might determine him in the choice of his subject, not that it affected him in the execution of it; and that which would be a very wrong instance to prove the decay of his imagination, is a very good one to evince the strength of his judgment. For had he, as Madame Dacier observes, composed the *Odyssey* in his youth, and the *Iliad* in his age, both must in reason have been exactly the same as they now stand. To blame Homer for his choice of such a subject as did not admit the same incidents and the same pomp of style as his former, is to take offence at too much variety, and to imagine, that when a man has written one good thing, he must ever after only copy himself.

The *Battle of Constantine*, and the *School of Athens*, are both pieces of Raphael: shall we censure the *School of Athens* as faulty, because it has not the fury and fire of the other? or shall we say that Raphael was grown grave and old, because he chose to represent the manners of old men and philosophers? There is all the silence, tranquillity, and composure in the one, and all the warmth, hurry, and tumult in the other, which the subject of either required: both of them had been imperfect, if they had not been as they are. And let the painter or poet be young or old who designs or performs in this manner, it proves him to have made the piece at a time of life when he was master not only of his art, but of his discretion.

Aristotle makes no such distinction between the two poems: he constantly cites them with equal praise, and draws the rules and examples of epic writing equally from both. But it is rather to the *Odyssey* that Horace gives the preference, in the *Epistle to Lollius*, and in the *Art of Poetry*. It is remarkable how opposite his opinion is to that of Longinus; and that the particulars he chooses to extol are those very fictions, and pictures of the manners, which the other seems least to approve. Those fables and manners are of the very essence of the work: but even without that regard, the fables themselves have both more invention and more instruction, and the manners more moral and example than those of the *Iliad*.

In some points, and those the most essential to the epic poem, the *Odyssey* is confessed to excel the *Iliad*; and principally in the great end of it, the moral. The conduct, turn, and disposition of the fable is also what the critics allow to be the better model for epic writers to follow; accordingly we find much more of the cast of this poem than of the other in the *Æneid*, and (what next to that is perhaps the greatest example) in the *Telemachus*. In the manners it is no way inferior: Longinus is so far from finding any defect in these that he rather taxes

Homer with painting them too minutely. As to the narrations, although they are more numerous as the occasions are more frequent, yet they carry no more the marks of old age, and are neither more prolix nor more circumstantial, than the conversations and dialogues of the *Iliad*. Not to mention the length of those of Phœnix in the ninth book, and of Nestor in the eleventh, (which may be thought in compliance to their characters.) those of Glaucus in the sixth, of Æneas in the twentieth, and some others, must be allowed to exceed any in the *Odyssey*. And that the propriety of style, and the numbers, in the narrations of each are equal, will appear to any who compare them.

To form a right judgment, whether the genius of Homer had suffered any decay, we must consider, in both his poems, such parts as are of a similar nature, and will bear comparison. And it is certain we shall find in each the same vivacity and fecundity of invention, the same life and strength of imaging and colouring, the particular descriptions as highly painted, the figures as bold, the metaphors as animated, and the numbers as harmonious, and as various.

The *Odyssey* is a perpetual source of poetry: the stream is not the less full for being gentle; though it is true (when we speak only with regard to the sublime) that a river, foaming and thundering in cataracts from rocks and precipices, is what more strikes, amazes, and fills the mind, than the same body of water, flowing afterward through peaceful vales and agreeable scenes of pasturage.

The *Odyssey*, as I have before said, ought to be considered according to its own nature and design, not with an eye to the *Iliad*. To censure Homer, because it is unlike what it was never meant to resemble, is as if a gardener, who had purposely cultivated two beautiful trees of contrary natures, as a specimen of his skill in the several kinds, should be blamed for not bringing them into pairs; when in root, stem, leaf, and flower, each was so entirely different, that one must have been spoiled in the endeavour to match the other.

Longinus, who saw this poem was "partly of the nature of comedy," ought not, for that very reason, to have considered it with a view to the *Iliad*. How little any such resemblance was the intention of Homer may appear from hence, that although the character of Ulysses was there already drawn, yet here he purposely turns to another side of it, and shows him not in that full light of glory, but in the shade of common life, with a mixture of such qualities as are requisite for all the lowest accidents of it, struggling with misfortunes, and on a level with the meanest of mankind. As for the other persons, none of them are above what we call the higher comedy: Calypso, though a goddess, is a character of intrigue; the suitors yet more approachi

to it; the Phæacians are of the same cast; the Cyclops, Melanthius, and Iris, descend even to droll characters; and the scenes that appear throughout are generally of the comic kind; banquets, revels, sports, loves, and the pursuit of a woman.

From the nature of the poem, we shall form an idea of the style. The diction is to follow the images, and to take its colour from the complexion of the thoughts. Accordingly the *Odyssey* is not always clothed in the 'majesty of verse proper to tragedy, but sometimes descends into the plainer narrative, and sometimes even to that familiar dialogue essential to comedy. However, where it cannot support a sublimity, it always preserves a dignity, or at least a propriety.

There is a real beauty in an easy, pure, perspicuous description, even of a low action. There are numerous instances of this both in Homer and Virgil; and perhaps those natural passages are not the least pleasing of their works. It is often the same in history, where the representations of common, or even domestic things, in clear, plain, and natural words, are frequently found to make the liveliest impression on the reader.

The question is, how far a poet, in pursuing the description or image of an action, can attach himself to little circumstances, without vulgarity or trifling? what particulars are proper, and enliven the image; or what are impertinent, and clog it? In this matter painting is to be consulted, and the whole regard had to those circumstances which contribute to form a full, and yet not a confused, idea of a thing.

Epithets are of vast service to this effect, and the right use of these is often the only expedient to render the narration poetical.

The great point of judgment is to distinguish when to speak simply, and when figuratively: but whenever the poet is obliged by the nature of this subject to descend to the lower manner of writing, an elevated style would be affected, and therefore ridiculous; and the more he was forced on figures and metaphors to avoid that lowness, the more the image would be broken, and consequently obscure.

One may add, that the use of the grand style on little subjects is not only ludicrous, but a sort of transgression against the rules of proportion and mechanics: it is using a vast force to lift a feather.

I believe, now I am on this head, it will be found a just observation, that the low actions of life cannot be put into a figurative style without being ridiculous; but things natural can. Metaphors raise the latter into dignity, as we see in the *Georgics*: but throw the former into ridicule, as in the *Lutrin*. I think this may very well be accounted for: laughter implies censure; inanimate and irrational beings are not objects of censure; therefore they may be elevated as much as you please, and no ridicule

follows; but when rational beings are represented above their real character, it becomes ridiculous in art, because it is vicious in morality. The bees in Virgil, were they rational beings, would be ridiculous by having their actions and manners represented on a level with creatures so superior as men; since it would imply folly or pride, which are the proper objects of ridicule.

The use of pompous expressions for low actions or thoughts is the true sublime of Don Quixote. How far unfit it is for epic poetry, appears in its being the perfection of the mock epic. It is so far from being the sublime of tragedy, that it is the cause of all bombast; when poets, instead of being, as they imagine, constantly lofty, only preserve throughout a painful equality of fustian: that continued swell of language (which runs indiscriminately even through their lowest characters, and rattles like some mightiness of meaning in the most indifferent subjects) is of a piece with that perpetual elevation of tone which the players have learned from it; and which is not speaking, but vociferating.

There is still more reason for a variation of style in epic poetry than in tragic, to distinguish between that language of the gods proper to the muse who sings, and is inspired, and that of men, who are introduced speaking only according to nature. Further, there ought to be a difference of style observed in the speeches of human persons, and those of deities; and again, in those which may be called set harangues or orations, and those which are only conversation or dialogue. Homer has more of the latter than any other poet; what Virgil does by two or three words of narration, Homer still performs by speeches: not only replies, but even rejoinders are frequent in him, a practice almost unknown to Virgil. This renders his poem more animated, but less grave and majestic; and consequently necessitates the frequent use of a lower style. The writers of tragedy lie under the same necessity if they would copy nature; whereas, that painted and poetical diction which they perpetually use, would be improper even in orations designed to move with all the arts of rhetoric: this is plain from the practice of Demosthenes and Cicero; and Virgil in those of Drances and Turnus gives an eminent example, how far removed the style of them ought to be from such an excess of figures and ornaments; which indeed fits only that language of the gods we have been speaking of, or that of a muse under inspiration.

To read through a whole work in this strain, is like travelling all along the ridge of a hill; which is not half so agreeable as sometimes gradually to rise, and sometimes gently to descend, as the way leads, and as the end of the journey directs.

Indeed, the true reason that so few poets have imitated Homer in these lower parts has been the extreme difficulty of preserv

ing that mixture of ease and dignity essential to them. For it is as hard for an epic poem to stoop to the narrative with success, as for a prince to descend to be familiar, without diminution to his greatness.

The sublime style is more easily counterfeited than the natural : something that passes for it, or sounds like it, is common in all false writers ; but nature, purity, perspicuity, and simplicity, never walk in the clouds ; they are obvious to all capacities ; and where they are not evident, they do not exist.

The most plain narration not only admits of these, and of harmony, (which are all the qualities of style,) but it requires every one of them to render it pleasing. On the contrary, whatever pretends to a share of the sublime may pass, notwithstanding any defects in the rest, nay, sometimes without any of them, and gain the admiration of all ordinary readers.

Homer, in his lowest narrations or speeches, is ever easy, flowing, copious, clear, and harmonious. He shows not less invention in assembling the humbler, than the greater thoughts and images ; nor less judgment in proportioning the style and the versification to these, than to the other. Let it be remembered that the same genius that soared the highest, and from whom the greatest models of the sublime are derived, was also he who stooped the lowest, and gave to the simple narrative its utmost perfection. Which of these was the harder task to Homer himself, I cannot pretend to determine ; but to his translator I can affirm (however unequal all his imitations must be) that of the latter has been much more difficult.

Whoever expects here the same pomp of verse, and the same ornaments of diction, as in the Iliad, he will, and he ought to be, disappointed. Were the original otherwise, it had been an offence against nature ; and were the translation so, it were an offence against Homer, which is the same thing.

It must be allowed that there is a majesty and harmony in the Greek language, which greatly contribute to elevate and support the narration. But I must also observe, that this is an advantage grown upon the language since Homer's time ; for things are removed from vulgarity by being out of use ; and if the words we could find in any present language were equally sonorous or musical in themselves, they would still appear less poetical and uncommon than those of a dead one, from this only circumstance, of being in every man's mouth. I may add to this another disadvantage to a translator, from a different cause : Homer seems to have taken on him the character of an historian, antiquary, divine, and professor of arts and sciences, as well as a poet. In one or other of these characters, he descends into many particularities, which as a poet only perhaps he would have avoided. All these ought to be preserved by a faithful translator, who in some measure takes the place of

Homer ; and all that can be expected from him is to make them as poetical as the subject will bear. Many arts, therefore, are requisite to supply these disadvantages, in order to dignify and solemnize these plainer parts, which hardly admit of any poetical ornaments.

Some use has been made to this end of the style of Milton. A just and moderate mixture of old words may have an effect like the working old abbey stones into a building, which I have sometimes seen to give a kind of venerable air, and yet not destroy the neatness, elegance, and equality, requisite to a new work ; I mean, without rendering it too unfamiliar or remote from the present purity of writing, or from that ease and smoothness which ought always to accompany narration or dialogue. In reading a style judiciously antiquated, one finds a pleasure not unlike that of travelling on an old Roman way ; but then the road must be as good as the way is ancient ; the style must be such in which we may evenly proceed, without being put to short stops by sudden abruptness, or puzzled by frequent turnings and transpositions. No man delights in furrows and stumbling-blocks ; and let our love to antiquity be ever so great, a fine ruin is one thing, and a heap of rubbish another. The imitators of Milton, like most other imitators, are not copies but caricatures of their original ; they are a hundred times more obsolete and cramp than he, and equally so in all places : whereas it should have been observed of Milton, that he is not lavish of his exotic words and phrases everywhere alike, but employs them much more where the subject is marvellous, vast, and strange, as in the scenes of heaven, hell, chaos, &c., than where it is turned to the natural and agreeable, as in the pictures of Paradise, the loves of our first parents, entertainments of angels, and the like. In general, this unusual style better serves to awaken our ideas in the descriptions and in the imaging and picturesque parts, than it agrees with the lower sort of narrations, the character of which is simplicity and purity. Milton has several of the latter, where we find not an antiquated, affected, or uncouth word, for some hundred lines together ; as in his fifth book, the latter part of the eighth, the former of the tenth and eleventh books, and in the narration of Michael in the twelfth. I wonder indeed that he, who ventured (contrary to the practice of all other epic poets) to imitate Homer's lownesses in the narrative, should not also have copied his plainness and perspicuity in the dramatic parts : since in his speeches (where clearness above all is necessary) there is frequently such transposition and forced construction, that the very sense is not to be discovered without a second or third reading, and in this certainly ought to be no example.

To preserve the true character of Homer's style in the present translation, great pains have been taken to be easy and natural.

The chief merit I can pretend to is, not to have been carried into a more plausible and figurative manner of writing, which would better have pleased all readers, but the judicious ones. My errors had been fewer, had each of those gentlemen who joined with me shown as much of the severity of a friend to me, as I did to them, in a strict animadversion and correction. What assistance I received from them was made known in general to the public in the original proposals for this work, and the particulars are specified at the conclusion of it ; to which I must add (to be punctually just) some part of the tenth and fifteenth books. The reader will now be too good a judge, how much the greater part of it, and consequently of its faults, is chargeable on me alone. But this I can with integrity affirm, that I have bestowed as much time and pains on the whole, as were consistent with the indispensable duties and cares of life, and with that wretched state of health which God has been pleased to make my portion. At the least, it is a pleasure to me to reflect, that I have introduced into our language this other work of the greatest and most ancient of poets, with some dignity ; and, I hope, with as little disadvantage as the *Iliad*. And if, after the unmerited success of that translation, any one will wonder why I would enterprise the *Odyssey*, I think it sufficient to say that Homer himself did the same, or the world would never have seen it.

I designed to have ended this postscript here : but since I am now taking my leave of Homer, and of all controversy relating to him, I beg leave to be indulged if I make use of this last opportunity to say a very few words about some reflections which the late Madame Dacier bestowed on the first part of my preface to the *Iliad*, and which she published at the end of her translation of that poem.*

To write gravely an answer to them, would be too much for the reflections ; and to say nothing concerning them, would be too little for the author. It is owing to the industry of that learned lady that our polite neighbours are become acquainted with many of Homer's beauties, which were hidden from them before in Greek and in Eustathius. She challenges on this account a particular regard from all the admirers of that great poet ; and I hope that I shall be thought, as I mean, to pay some part of this debt to her memory, in what I am now writing.

Had these reflections fallen from the pen of an ordinary critic, I should not have apprehended their effect, and should therefore have been silent concerning them ; but since they are Madame Dacier's, I imagine that they must be of weight ; and in a case where I think her reasoning very bad, I respect her authority.

I have fought under Madame Dacier's banner and have waged

* Second edition, at Paris, 1719.

war in defence of the divine Homer against all the heretics of the age. And yet it is Madame Dacier who accuses me, and who accuses me of nothing less than betraying our common cause. She affirms that the most declared enemies of this author have never said anything against him more injurious or more unjust than I. What must the world think of me, after such a judgment passed by so great a critic; the world, who decides so often, and examines so seldom; the world, who even in matters of literature is almost always the slave of authority? Who will suspect that so much learning should mistake, that so much accuracy should be misled, or that so much candour should be biased?

All this, however, has happened, and Madame Dacier's criticisms on my preface flow from the very same error from which so many false criticisms of her countrymen on Homer have flowed, and which she has so justly and so severely reprovèd; I mean the error of depending on injurious and unskilful translations.

An indifferent translation may be of some use, and a good one will be of a great deal. But I think that no translation ought to be the ground for criticism, because no man ought to be condemned on another man's explanation of his meaning; could Homer have had the honour of explaining his before that august tribunal where Monsieur de la Motte presides, I make no doubt but he had escaped many of those severe animadversions with which some French authors have loaded him, and from which even Madame Dacier's translation of the Iliad could not preserve him.

How unhappy was it for me that the knowledge of our island-tongue was as necessary to Madame Dacier in my case, as the knowledge of Greek was to Monsieur de la Motte in that of our great author; or to any of those whom she styles blind censurers, and blames for condemning what they did not understand.

I may say with modesty, that she knew less of my true sense from that faulty translation of part of my preface, than those blind censurers might have known of Homer's even from the translation of La Valterie, which preceded her own.

It pleased me, however, to find that her objections were not levelled at the general doctrine, or at any essentials of my preface, but only at a few particular expressions. She proposed little more than (to use her own phrase) to combat two or three similies; and I hope that to combat a similie is no more than to fight with a shadow, since a similie is no better than the shadow of an argument.

She lays much weight where I laid but little, and examines with more scrupulosity than I writ, or than perhaps the matter requires.

These unlucky similies, taken by themselves, may perhaps render my meaning equivocal to an ignorant translator ; or there may have fallen from my pen some expressions, which, taken by themselves, likewise, may to the same person have the same effect. But if the translator had been master of our tongue, the general tenour of my argument, that which precedes and that which follows the passages objected to, would have sufficiently determined him as to the precise meaning of them ; and if Madame Dacier had taken up her pen a little more leisurely, or had employed it with more temper, she would not have answered paraphrases of her own, which even the translation will not justify, and which say, more than once, the very contrary to what I have said in the passages themselves.

If any person has curiosity enough to read the whole paragraphs in my preface, on some mangled parts of which these reflections are made, he will easily discern that I am as orthodox as Madame Dacier herself in those very articles on which she treats me like a heretic : he will easily see that all the difference between us consists in this, that I offer opinions, and she delivers doctrines ; that my imagination represents Homer as the greatest of human poets, whereas in hers he was exalted above humanity ; infallibility and impeccability were two of his attributes. There was therefore no need of defending Homer against me, who, if I mistake not, had carried my admiration of him as far as it can be carried, without giving a real occasion of writing in his defence.

After answering my harmless similies, she proceeds to a matter which does not regard so much the honour of Homer, as that of the times he lived in ; and here I must confess she does not wholly mistake my meaning, but I think she mistakes the state of the question. She had said, the manners of those times were so much the better, the less they were like ours. I thought this required a little qualification. I confessed that in my opinion the world was mended in some points, such as the custom of putting whole nations to the sword, condemning kings and their families to perpetual slavery, and a few others. Madame Dacier judges otherwise in this ; but as to the rest, particularly in preferring the simplicity of the ancient world to the luxury of ours, which is the main point contended for, she owns we agree. This I thought was well ; but I am so unfortunate that this too is taken amiss, and called adopting or (if you will) stealing her sentiment. The truth is, she might have said her words, for I used them on purpose, being then professedly citing from her : though I might have done the same without intending that compliment, for they are also to be found in Eustathius, and the sentiment I believe is that of all mankind. I cannot really tell what to say to this whole remark, only that in the first part of it, Madame Dacier is displeased that I do not agree with her,

and in the last that I do : but this is a temper which every polite man should overlook in a lady.

To punish my ingratitude, she resolves to expose my blunders, and selects two which I suppose are the most flagrant, out of the many for which she could have chastised me. It happens that the first of these is in part the translator's, and in part her own, without any share of mine : she quotes the end of a sentence, and he puts in French what I never wrote in English : "Homer," I said, "opened a new and boundless walk for his imagination, and created a world for himself in the invention of fable ;" which he translates, "Homer crea pour son usage un monde mouvant, en inventant la fable."

Madame Dacier justly wonders at this nonsense in me, and I, in the translator. As to what I meant by Homer's invention of fable, it is afterward particularly distinguished from that extensive sense in which she took it, by these words : "If Homer was not the first who introduced the deities (as Herodotus imagines) into the religion of Greece, he seems the first who brought them into a system of machinery for poetry."

The other blunder she accuses me of is, the mistaking a passage in Aristotle, and she is pleased to send me back to this philosopher's treatise of poetry, and to her preface on the *Odyssey*, for my better instruction. Now, though I am saucy enough to think that one may sometimes differ from Aristotle without blundering, and though I am sure one may sometimes fall into an error by following him servilely, yet I own, that to quote any author for what he never said, is a blunder ; (but, by-the-way, to correct an author for what he never said, is somewhat worse than a blunder.) My words were these : "As there is a greater variety of characters in the *Iliad* than in any other poem, so there is of speeches. Everything in it has manners, as Aristotle expresses it ; that is, everything is acted or spoken ; very little passes in narration." She justly says, that "Everything which is acted or spoken has not necessarily manners, merely because it is acted or spoken." Agreed : but I would ask the question, whether anything can have manners which is neither acted nor spoken ? If not, then the whole *Iliad* being almost spent in speech and action, almost everything in it has manners ; since Homer has been proved before, in a long paragraph of the preface, to have excelled in drawing characters and painting manners ; and indeed this whole poem is one continued occasion of showing this bright part of his talent.

To speak fairly, it is impossible she could read even the translation and take my sense so wrong as she represents it : but I was first translated ignorantly, and then read partially. My expression indeed was not quite exact ; it should have been, "Everything has manners, as Aristotle calls them." But such a fault, methinks, might have been spared ; since if one was to

look with that disposition she discovers towards me, even on her own excellent writings, one might find some mistakes which no context can redress ; as where she makes Eustathius call Cratisthenes the Phliasian, Callisthenes the Physician.* What a triumph might some slips of this sort have afforded to Homer's, hers, and my enemies, from which she was only screened by their happy ignorance ! How unlucky had it been, when she insulted M. de la Motte for omitting a material passage in the speech of Helen to Hector, *Iliad* vi.,† if some champion for the moderns had by chance understood so much Greek, as to whisper him, that there was no such passage in Homer !

Our concern, zeal, and even jealousy for our great author's honour, were mutual ; our endeavours to advance it were equal ; and I have as often trembled for it in her hands, as she could in mine. It was one of the many reasons I had to wish the longer life of this lady, that I must certainly have regained her good opinion, in spite of all misrepresenting translators whatever. I could not have expected it on any other terms than being approved as great, if not as passionate, an admirer of Homer as herself. For that was the first condition of her favour and friendship ; otherwise not one's taste alone, but one's morality had been corrupted, nor would any man's religion have been unsuspected, who did not implicitly believe in an author whose doctrine is so conformable to Holy Scripture. However, as different people have different ways of expressing their belief, some purely by public and general acts of worship, others by a reverend sort of reasoning and inquiry about the grounds of it ; it is the same in admiration, some prove it by exclamations, others by respect. I have observed that the loudest huzzas given to a great man in a triumph proceed not from his friends, but the rabble ; and as I have fancied it the same with the rabble of critics, a desire to be distinguished from them has turned me to the more moderate, and I hope, more rational method. Though I am a poet, I would not be an enthusiast ; and though I am an Englishman, I would not be furiously of a party. I am far from thinking myself that genius, on whom, at the end of these remarks, Madame Dacier congratulates my country ; one capable of "correcting Homer, and consequently of reforming mankind, and amending this constitution." It was not to Great Britain this ought to have been applied, since our nation has one happiness for which she might have preferred it to her own, that as much as we abound in other miserable misguided sects, we have at least none of the blasphemers of Homer. We steadfastly and unanimously believe both his poem and our constitution to be the best that ever human wit invent-

* Dacier *Remarques sur le 4me livre de l'Odyss.* p. 467.

† *De la Corruption du Goût.*

ed: that the one is not more incapable of amendment than the other; and, old as they both are, we despise any French or Englishman whatever, who shall presume to retrench, to innovate, or to make the least alteration in either. Far therefore from the genius for which Madame Dacier mistook me, my whole desire is but to preserve the humble character of a faithful translator, and a quiet subject.

END OF HOMER

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